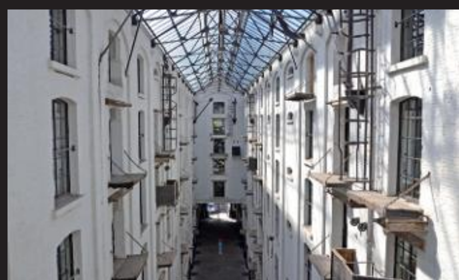

EUROPEAN COMMERCIAL HISTORICAL ARCHIVES
UNESCO “Memory of the World”

Quincentenary of the birth of Simón Ruiz
1525-2025

FUNDACIÓN MUSEO DE LAS FERIAS MEDINA DEL CAMPO

Archivo Simón Ruiz

EXCMO. AYUNTAMIENTO DE MEDINA DEL CAMPO

GOBIERNO DE ESPAÑA MINISTERIO DE CULTURA

Junta de Castilla y León

Antonio Sánchez del Barrio
(Direction)

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Museo de las Ferias Foundation— Simón Ruiz Archive
Medina del Campo
2025

Editor

Museo de las Ferias Foundation – Simón Ruiz Archive

Sponsoring institutions

Ministry of Culture, Government of Spain
Junta of Castile and León
City Council of Medina del Campo

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-Dutch to Spanish and Dutch to English: texts from Museum Plantin-Moretus, Dutch East India Company Archive and FelixArchief
-Spanish to Dutch: texts from the Simón Ruiz Archive
-Spanish to English: texts from the Simón Ruiz Archive
-English to Dutch: texts from the *Banco di Napoli* Archive

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-Italian to English: texts from the *Banco di Napoli* Archive
-Italian to Spanish: texts from the *Banco di Napoli* Archive
-Spanish to Italian: texts from the Simón Ruiz Archive
-English to Italian: texts from the Museum Plantin-Moretus, Dutch East India Company Archive, and FelixArchief

Photographs

-Museum Plantin-Moretus. Antwerp: Ans Brys, pp. 16-49, except: Filip Dujardin, p. 34; Bart Huysmans & Michel Wuyts, pp. 28, 30 and 33; Michel Wuyts, p. 24.
-National Archives of the Netherlands: pp. 56-88
-FelixArchief, Antwerp City Archives: pp. 102-131
-Banco di Napoli Foundation Archives: Michele de Filippo, pp. 140-163
-Simón Ruiz Archive: Museo de las Ferias Foundation photographic archive, pp. 168-199 (except photography p. 198, courtesy of the Museo Nacional del Prado)

Layout

Editorial Gráficas Maxtor

ISBN: 978-84-09-84699-3

This edition has received financial support from: "NextGenerationEU Recovery, Transformation, and Resilience Plan" (Ministry of Culture, Government of Spain); "Cultural Heritage Management Projects of Castilla y León" (Regional Government of Castilla y León, Department of Culture, Tourism, and Sport), and the Medina del Campo City Council (Collaboration Agreement with the Museo de las Ferias Foundation – Simón Ruiz Archive).

"Archives are a unique and irreplaceable heritage passed from one generation to another. Archives are managed from creation to preserve their value and meaning. They are authoritative sources of information underpinning accountable and transparent administrative actions. They play an essential role in the development of societies by safeguarding and contributing to individual and community memory. Open access to archives enriches our knowledge of human society, promotes democracy, protects citizens' rights and enhances the quality of life."

"Universal Declaration on Archives", adopted by the
International Council on Archives (ICA) and UNESCO in 2011

Almost twenty years ago, we embarked on a book project with the primary aim of presenting the historical heritage –architectural, artistic, and documentary– of three major figures in the history of European trade and finance that lives on to this day: Francesco di Marco Datini (1335-1410), Jakob Fugger (1459-1525) and Simón Ruiz (1525-1597). The outcome of this endeavour was the publication of a meticulously curated bilingual book (Spanish and English) featuring contributions from eminent historians, including university professors and faculty members associated with the institutions that custodian these legacies. All the contributors highlighted the surprising correlations between these businessmen and the cultural heritage they left behind, which is still evident today.

At the end of 2022, the idea arose to propose a new publishing project to other European institutions, with the aim of jointly presenting this type of historical legacy related to the history of trade in general. This was in the context of the international dissemination plans that the Simón Ruiz Archive was developing at the time. This occurred a few months before the new entries to UNESCO's "Memory of the World Register" were announced, including our archive's nomination. Once this distinction was achieved in May 2023, the idea of inviting other large, historically significant commercial archives with a European or global scope that had previously been recognised by UNESCO as a "Memory of the World" to participate in the project was formalised. Using the year of entry into the Register as a reference point, we made contact with the following archives in order: the Archive of the *Officina Plantiniana* (Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp, "Memory of the World" since 2001); the Archive of the Dutch East India Company (National Archives of the Netherlands, The Hague, since 2004); the Antwerp Chamber of Insolvent Estates (FelixArchief, Antwerp, since 2009); and the Apodissario Fund of the Archive of the Bank of Naples Foundation, which was also considered by UNESCO in 2023 (they appear in this edition in precisely this chronological order).

Between May and June 2023, the first institutional meetings were held with those responsible for the aforementioned document collections. An agreement was quickly reached whereby each institution would undertake the specific study of its corresponding archive with the participation of its own technical expert. This marked the beginning of an exciting multilingual publishing project: texts were produced in Dutch, Italian and Spanish, in accordance with the origin of the participating archives, as well as in English, the most widely spoken international language. A long period then began, involving writing texts, translating them into the proposed languages, collecting and selecting images, and coordinating articles and institutional presentations. Months later, work moved on to the graphic layout and final editing of the digital and printed versions.

All of the archives mentioned more than fulfilled the criteria of being commercial or financial in nature. They have several centuries of history, an international scope and significance, and have received the highest institutional recognition from UNESCO. The Archive of the *Officina Plantiniana*, the only example of a printing and publishing house from before the industrial era that has been preserved almost in its entirety, created by Christophe Plantin in the city of the Scheldt; that of the Dutch East India Company, whose global documentary collections –as was the multinational spice import company itself– go beyond those preserved in the administrative capital of the Netherlands; that of the Antwerp Chamber of Insolvent Estates, a shining example of the preservation of documentation from large and small commercial companies in the economic capital of 16th-century Europe; the Apodissario Fund of the Bank of Naples, which contains the financial transactions of the eight public banks that operated in that Italian city between the 16th and 19th centuries; and the Simón Ruiz Archive, the only case of a documentary collection from a 16th-century Spanish merchant banker operating internationally that has survived to the present day.

These five archives are therefore global benchmarks in the history of trade, each in its own field and speciality. On this occasion, we are interested in presenting their particular histories in a parallel and comparative manner: on the one hand, their different origins, their evolution over the centuries, the problems of all kinds that they have had to overcome in each case –some of them truly astonishing– in order to endure over time and reach the present day in good condition in terms of conservation, description and public access; and, on the other hand, a reasoned summary of the collections that make up each archive. This is all the more important given that documentary heritage is often the least valued of historical legacies and therefore the most difficult to preserve and make freely accessible.

It is only fair to end this introduction with a public expression of gratitude to the institutions whose sponsorship has made this project possible. Firstly, the aid provided by the Spanish Ministry of Culture's "Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan" (Deputy Directorate-General for State Archives), with funds from the European Union (2022-2023), thanks to which the initial work of drafting and international dissemination of the Simón Ruiz Archive could be carried out. Similarly, the final translation, editing and publication work, in its four versions, has been made possible thanks to the inclusion of the project in the "Comprehensive Strategic Plan" for the renovation of the Museo de las Ferias Foundation – Simón Ruiz Archive, included in the "Cultural Heritage Asset Management Projects of Castilla y León (2024-2025)" sponsored by the Regional Government of Castilla y León, which, in our case, has also involved the participation of the Medina del Campo Town Council. We hope that these shared institutional efforts will be the first step towards a broader programme of international cultural exchange. In the short and medium term, this programme will focus on studying and disseminating the documentary legacies of the participating archives.

Antonio Sánchez del Barrio

Museum
Plantin-Moretus

The *Officina Plantiniana* Archive

Inscribed in the UNESCO "Memory of the World"
Register on September 4, 2001

The *Officina Plantiniana* archive today and tomorrow

The Museum Plantin-Moretus is world heritage in all its facets. It is the only surviving pre-industrial printing house in the world that owes its importance to the fact that the *Officina Plantiniana* was the largest printing and publishing house of its time. Founded in 1555 by Christopher Plantin during one of the Low Countries' most turbulent periods, the *Officina* grew into the beating heart of humanism in the Low Countries. Plantin's company is also the first example of a capitalist industrial enterprise in the typographical sector whose production found its outlet as far away as North Africa, America and the East as a result of a well-developed distribution network. The printing/publishing business was continued until 1876 by his descendants, the Moretuses, making the site a unique testimony to 300 years of living and working culture.

The archive, Memory of the World since 2001, provides information on the history of book printing history, economic and socio-economic history as well as humanism and counter-reformation, the development of science, working conditions in the *Officina*, social organization and the position of women and the average man and the culture of living from 1555 to 1876.

The residence and printing house are registered as UNESCO World Heritage Sites since 2005. Plantin housed his company on this site in 1576 and the *Officina Plantiniana* remained in operation on this very site for the next 300 years, keeping all the testimonies of the company's importance here. In 1876, the complex was opened as a museum. The museum team has been the guardian of this legacy for almost 150 years, the focus being on preservation, inventory and research. But this legacy should not be a dead matter; we can only preserve it for future generations if we keep it alive and relevant to our current heritage communities.

The collections are one entity; the complementarity of our collections increases relevance for visitors and for academic research. The house and archives contain a wealth of stories about life and work, about heritage traditions that live on to this day. What happens in our society today influences how we give meaning to how we deploy the collections in the permanent display, through our social media and in exhibitions. Through storytelling, we bring the small stories from everyday life alongside the story of the entrepreneurs. These recognizable themes allow us to engage our highly diverse audience more closely: what stories and voices do they want to hear, what stories do they want to add. For our participative projects, we invite young people, newcomers, the disadvantaged, the creative industry, our volunteers and specialists to the table. This is how we keep our finger on the pulse.

Participation is not limited to opening up our collections to the general public. Volunteers get the chance to help manage planning and projects in all areas of operation (heritage care, registration, research, print demos, workshops ...). We set up citizen science projects to transcribe our archival documents and make them accessible to non-specialists. By accelerating the digitalization of the archive (and the other collections), the rich archive can be used by teachers, e.g. the business archive for the economics class, the typography collection for the typography course…

It is a constant concern to make the archive as widely accessible as possible to a very diverse audience. We will show the first results of this in 2025 in our projects on the women entrepreneurs of this house and in 2026 in the new permanent museum presentation.

Iris Kockelbergh
Director Museum Plantin-Moretus

Printing heritage of world importance. The business archives of the *Officina Plantiniana*

Kristof Selleslach
Curator of archives. Museum Plantin-Moretus

All great things have small beginnings. When Frenchman Christophe Plantin settled in Antwerp in the mid sixteenth century, he started a modest bookbinding business. He soon ventured into printing and publishing, and within a few years he had built the largest printing and publishing house in Europe. Driven by the founder's fame, his successors from the Moretus family carried on the *Officina Plantiniana* for nine generations. They kept almost everything. Today, the documentary records of over three centuries of business activity form a unique business archive. Nowhere else in the world are the archives of a leading publishing and printing office from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as complete as at the Plantin Press. For this reason, the business archives were declared "Memory of the World" by UNESCO in 2001.

Christophe Plantin: a self-made man with excellent connections

When Christophe Plantin printed his first book in 1555, he had already come a long way. A self-made man, he lost both his parents at an early age. Plantin was born around 1520 in the village of Saint-Avertin, just outside the French city of Tours. His mother died of the plague when he was still an infant. His father Jean worked as a tutor and teacher for wealthy families. He took young Christophe from one employer to another. Father and son ended up with the Porret family in Saint-Just, near Lyon. Here he met Pierre Porret (after 1520 - ca. 1595), a lifelong friend. Thanks to Porret's letters to Plantin, we can reconstruct Plantin's childhood to a certain extent.

After a few years, Plantin's father moved to a new employer in Paris. But in 1534 he accompanied his employer on a journey to Lyon. He left his 14-year-old son Christophe alone in Paris with a sum of money for his maintenance. The promise of his return was not kept. Sometime later, Christophe received the bad news that his father had died. As a young teenager, Plantin was suddenly all alone. He went to Normandy. In the town of Caen, he was apprenticed to Robert Macé, a bookseller and bookbinder. It was here that Plantin met his wife Jeanne Rivière (†1596). They married and their first daughter, Marguérite, was born in 1547. Around 1548 or 1549 the family moved to Antwerp.

By the middle of the sixteenth century, the city on the Scheldt had become an economic metropolis of European proportions. Antwerp was at the forefront of the book trade, alongside Venice and Paris. Christophe Plantin saw opportunities for professional development in this booming city. He established himself as a bookbinder in the Lombardenvest. In those days, a customer usually bought a book without a binding from a bookseller. The customer would then go to the bookbinder to have the binding made according to his wishes and within his budget. Christophe Plantin served the upper segment of the book binding market.

Peter Paul Rubens, Portrait of Christophe Plantin, [1612-1616] (MPM.V.IV.047).

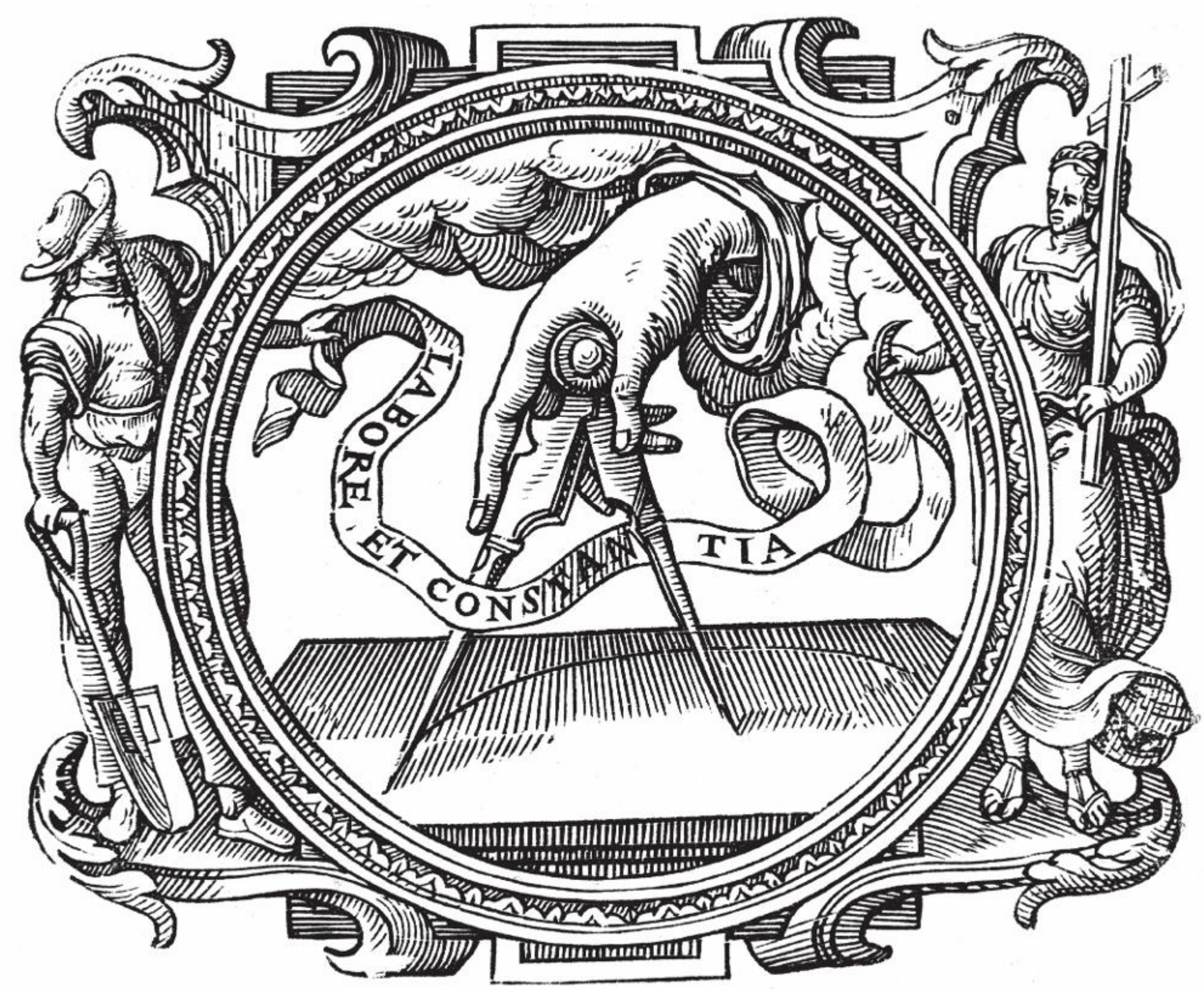
Biblia sacra Hebraice, Chaldaice, Græce, & Latine, Antwerp, Christophe Plantin, 1571-1573, 2o (A 5:1).

Christophe Plantin, book binding for *La institutione di una fanciulla nata nobilmente*, c. 1555 (O.B 3.8).

Woodblock. Gerard Jansen van Kampen, Printer's mark of the *Officina Plantiniana*, c. 1578 (MPM.HB.08137).

In 1555, Plantin made a change of career and set himself up as a printer and publisher. He had been nurturing this ambition since his arrival in Antwerp. When Christophe Plantin joined the Guild of St Luke's Artists and Printers in 1550, the secretary explicitly added the profession of printer to his name. The first book Plantin printed was *La institutione di una fanciulla nata nobilmente* by Giovanni Michele Bruto. He printed this treatise on the education of noble young ladies in collaboration with his Antwerp colleague Joannes Bellerus. Soon after, Plantin started printing on his own account. At that time, it was customary for publishers to distinguish themselves from one another by means of a visual mark on the title page. This was usually accompanied by a motto in Latin. Christophe Plantin chose the "Gulden Passer" (The Golden Compasses) and the Latin motto "Labore et Constantia" ("Through Work and Constancy"). One leg of the compass works hard to complete the circle (Labore), while the other remains steadfast (Constantia).

For several years, Christophe Plantin's book business grew steadily until 1562, when it came to an abrupt halt. During a raid ordered by the governess Margaret of Parma, a heretical pamphlet was found in the printing office. At that time, Plantin was on business in Paris for about six weeks. Although three companions



Modern print. Gerard Jansen van Kampen, Printer's mark of the *Officina Plantiniana*, c. 1578 (MPM.HB.08137).

had benefited from his absence, Plantin was responsible as master. He wisely stayed in Paris and let the storm pass. Meanwhile, Plantin's business associates placed his printing business and possessions beyond the reach of any confiscation. They took a drastic approach. Two business partners posed as creditors to force a public sale of Plantin's goods.

In the autumn of 1563, Christophe Plantin made a fresh start. To this end, he entered a partnership with four wealthy Antwerp citizens. One of the associates, Cornelis van Bomberghen, had been a creditor at the public sale. This is a strong indication that the forced sale was a set up game. Business was going well until the political situation in the Netherlands intervened. In response to Protestant iconoclasm, the Duke of Alva moved into the Netherlands with an army to restore order. Many Protestants anticipated the arrival of the new governor and fled the Netherlands. Plantin's associates, including Cornelis van Bomberghen, were mainly Protestants. They left the country, and the association was dissolved.

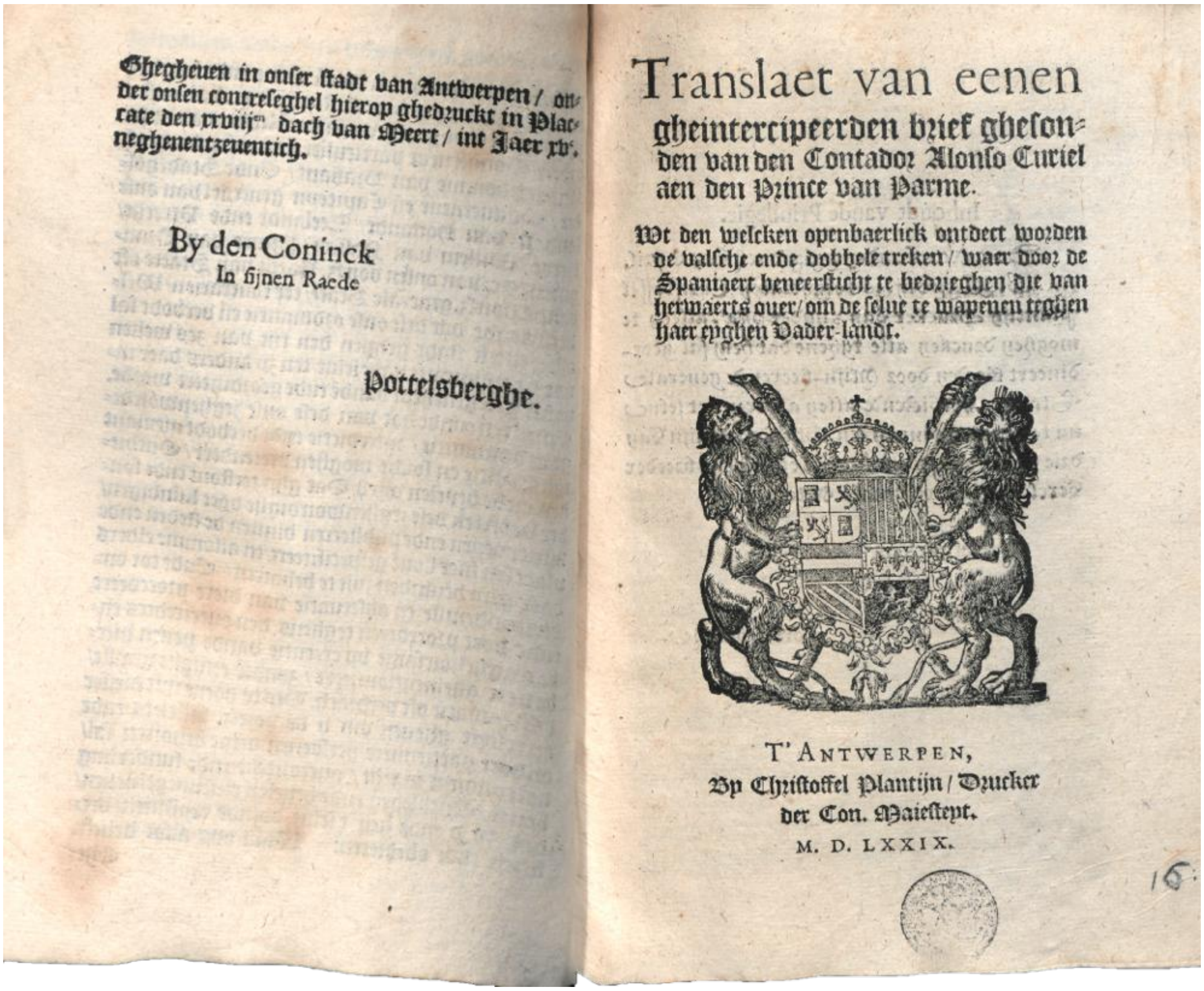
Christophe Plantin continued the printing office on his own and developed a diverse publisher's list. During his 34-year career, he edited some 2,500 publications, an average of 74 editions per year. About 35% of his editions were religious in nature. These included Bibles in various languages, theological works and liturgical books. Religion was of great social importance in the sixteenth century. Religion also tended to feature prominently in the publisher's lists of his competitors. The category "Humanism and Literature" was equally large at 35%. This category mainly includes classical authors from the Ancient Times and contemporary poets. The most successful author in this category was the humanist Justus Lipsius (1547-1606). Government prints and pamphlets accounted for about 13%. Christophe Plantin was the official printer of several authorities. He also published pamphlets, often against the very same authorities. The category of "science" accounted for about 10% of his publications. This included exact scientific publications such as botanical and anatomical works, as well as geography and history. Plantin published the herbal books of the three most important botanists of the Low Countries: Rembert Dodoens, Carolus Clusius and Matthias de l'Obel. From 1579 Plantin also printed the texts for the atlases of the famous cartographer Abraham Ortelius. About 7% of the prints do not fall into the above categories. These include music prints, such as the monumental polyphonic choir book by the composer Georges de la Hèle.

At the height of his career, in 1574, Christophe Plantin lived and worked in the building named "De Grote Valk" in the Kammenstraat, in the narrow block of houses between the Bergstraat and the Gierstraat, which was then called the Valkstraat. At that time, Christophe Plantin had 16 printing presses in operation and the workforce numbered 60 men. A further 20 craftsmen worked for him outside the printing office. These were huge numbers for the time. The famous Estienne family of printers never had more than four printing presses in Geneva at the same time. In the seventeenth century, you could count on one hand the number of printers in Paris with more than four presses. The scale of Plantin's printing works was not equalled until the industrial revolution at the end of the eighteenth century.

In the summer of 1576, Christophe Plantin moved to the Vrijdagmarkt, where the Museum Plantin-Moretus still stands today. A few months after the move, Antwerp experienced one of the darkest pages in its history with the Spanish Fury. On 4 November 1576, poorly paid soldiers marched from the citadel into the city. For three days the mutineers plundered Antwerp. The town hall on the Grote Markt went up in flames. Christophe Plantin and his family were terrified. Up to three times they had to put out fires in the printing shop. No fewer than nine times Plantin had to pay a huge ransom to save his life and that of his family. Fortunately, they all survived the ordeal. When the plundering stopped, Plantin left for France. He was desperate for fresh capital to keep the printing office going and to pay off the loans. In desperate need of money, Plantin sold his Paris branch to the bookseller Michel Sonnius. From then on, Sonnius was the exclusive distributor of Plantin's editions in Paris. With the sale of the branch, his son-in-law and branch manager Gilles Beys (c. 1541-1595) abruptly lost his job and income.

Christophe Plantin established excellent relations with various authorities. He made friends with high-ranking officials such as Cardinal de Granvelle and Gabriel de Çayas, Philip II's secretary for the Netherlands. Thanks to his good contacts, Plantin was appointed arch-printer to the Spanish king in 1570. With the blessing and support of Philip II, he undertook a gigantic task. The edition of the Bible in the original languages became Plantin's masterpiece par excellence. The king sent his chaplain, Benito Arias Montano, to Antwerp to supervise the Biblia Regia for five years. At the same time, Christophe Plantin had acquired the monopoly on liturgical books for the Netherlands and Spain. After the Council of Trent, all the old mass books had to be replaced by the new Roman Catholic version. This was a very profitable business for Plantin.

As the rebellious States General in the Netherlands moved further and further away from Spanish authority, Christophe Plantin was


Ghegheuen in onser stadt van Antwerpen / on-
der onsen contreseghel hierop ghedruckt in Plac-
cate den xviij^m dach van Meert / int Iaer xv^c.
neghenentzeuentich.

By den Coninck
In sijnen Raede

Pottelsberghe.

Translaet van eenen
gheintercipeerden brief ghesonden van den Contador Alonso Curiel
aen den Prince van Parme.

Wt den welcken openbaerlick ontdect worden
de valsche ende dobbele treken / waer door de
Spaniaert beneerstucht te bedrieghen die van
herwaerts ouer / om de selue te wapenen teghen
haer eyghen Vader-landt.

T'Antwerpen,
By Christoffel Plantijn / Drucker
der Con. Maiesteyt.
M. D. LXXIX.

16.

Translaet van eenen gheintercipeerden brief ghesonden [...] *aen den prince van Parme,* Antwerp, Christophe Plantin, 1580, 8vo (R 16.27:16).

happy to work with them. The States General appointed him official printer in 1578. From then on, Plantin did all the printing for the central government of the rebellious Netherlands. At the same time, he remained the Arch-Printer of the Spanish king Philip II. This contradiction led to bizarre situations. In a 1579 pamphlet, Plantin published a supposedly intercepted letter to the governor Alexander Farnese. According to the title page, the pamphlet states that the letter "openly reveals the false and duplicitous traits by which the Spaniard has been able to deceive the Dutch in order to gain control of the Netherlands". Under the coat of arms of Philip II, Plantin signs with his usual imprint: "T'Antwerpen, By Christoffel Plantijn, Drucker der Con[incklijcke] Maiesteyt, 1579" ("In Antwerp, by Christophe Plantin, printer of his Royal Majesty, 1579"). Later, Plantin became more cautious and replaced his name on the title page of pamphlets with the name of one of his collaborators.

At the same time as the States General, the Calvinist Republic of Antwerp appointed Plantin as the official city council printer. After the fall of Antwerp in 1585, he legitimised his collaboration with the insurgents by claiming that he had been forced to cooperate. This does not correspond at all to reality. The petition and the official appointment clearly show that Plantin was appointed at his own request. However, it was not until 1581 that he dared to mention his title of official printer to the States General on the title pages.

The rebels saw a change in the tide of war. From 1581, Governor Alexander Farnese reconquered town after town in Brabant and Flanders. In the autumn of 1582, the far-sighted Plantin applied for the vacant post of printer to the young University of Leiden. Christophe Plantin had two reasons for moving. Firstly, it was dangerous to bet on one horse. A possible siege of Antwerp would cut him off from his market. By establishing a branch in Leiden, he created a second base for his printing business. Secondly, the fixed salary as a university printer gave him financial security in difficult economic times. His sons-in-law, Jan Moretus and Franciscus Raphelengius, remained in Antwerp to run the printing shop. In July 1584, Farnese effectively launched the siege of Antwerp. Book production was necessarily reduced. In Leiden, on the other hand, production was up to par. Plantin printed two versions of different editions. One version mentioned "Antwerp" as the place of publication, the other "Leiden". Both versions, however, were printed on the same press. During the siege of Antwerp, this was usually Leiden. It was also in this city that Plantin published several works by the mathematician Simon Stevin (1548-1620).

Antwerp fell in August 1585 after more than a year of siege. Immediately after the fall of Antwerp, Christophe Plantin decided to return to the town on the Scheldt. To avoid the front line, he made a long detour via Hamburg and Frankfurt. Francis Raphelengius I (1539-1597) did the opposite. Plantin's son-in-law had now converted to Calvinism, as had his eldest son Christophe Raphelengius and his daughter Elisabeth. His wife Marguérite Plantin (1547-1594) and sons Joost and Franciscus junior had remained loyal to the Catholic Church but moved with them to Leiden. The religiously divided Raphelengius family took over the Plantin branch there and ran it in a semi-independent manner.

After his return to Antwerp, rumours circulated that Christophe Plantin had participated in Calvinist rites in Leiden. His ecclesiastical friends took him under their protection and testified that Plantin had always remained faithful to the Catholic religion. Was this true? What was Plantin's real religion? To avoid scandal, Plantin presented himself as a devout Catholic. But there is much evidence that he was a follower of the "Huis der Liefde" (the Family of Love). This sectarian religious community was led by the self-proclaimed prophet Hendrik Niclaes (c. 1501-c. 1580). He founded the sect around 1540 after experiencing some mystical visions. Non-violence was an important pillar of the Family of Love. The sect was open to followers of any faith as long as they accepted the supremacy and message of the Prophet. Consequently, followers outwardly professed the common faith of the region in which they lived. Hendrik Niclaes' teachings were largely based on the Bible, which he interpreted not literally but spiritually and allegorically. Only through faith would man regain the state of original purity that preceded the Fall.

It is likely that Plantin learned about the Family of Love in Paris. After settling in Antwerp, he joined the sect. He participated actively in the propaganda of the Family of Love. Plantin secretly printed some of the Prophet's writings in his Antwerp printing shop. He also helped his fellow printer, Augustijn van Hasselt, to obtain the necessary typographic materials to set up a secret printing press for the Family of Love in Vianen, near Utrecht, in 1566. When the Duke of Alva arrived in the Netherlands in 1567, Plantin severed all ties with Hendrik Niclaes for security reasons. More than a decade later, he re-established contact with a secession of the Family of Love. The former follower Hendrik Janssen van Barrefelt had founded his own sect, which he led like a prophet under the name Hiël. Plantin fell under his spell and secretly printed some of Hiël's writings.

Peter Paul Rubens, Portrait of Jan Moretus I, [1612-1616] (MPM.V.IV.051).

The *Officina Plantiniana* under eight generations of the Moretus family

Surrounded by his family, the founder Christophe Plantin died in his bed at midnight on 1 July 1589. Jeanne Rivière, the surviving spouse, inherited her husband's printing office. Her five daughters and their husbands also settled their mother's estate in one move after their father's death. The only son, named Christophe after his father, had died in infancy. The succession was therefore open. Jan Moretus I (1543-1610), husband of Martine Plantin (1550-1616) and Plantin's right-hand man for many years, was the obvious successor. But the other heirs also wanted their share. They did not agree with the founder's will, which left the *Officina Plantiniana* entirely to Martine and Jan. Gilles Beys, in particular, still held a grudge against Jan Moretus because Plantin had sold his shop in Paris and had lost his job as a result. He hurried from Paris to Antwerp to take part in the negotiations for the estate. After nine months of negotiations, the heirs reached an agreement on the distribution of the estate in March 1590. The final agreement stipulated that Jan and Martine had a right of pre-emption on Plantin's printing business. Exercising this right, they bought out the sisters Cathérine, Madeleine and Henriette for 3,600 Carolus guilders each. In the partition, the eldest sister, Marguérite, was assigned the printing office in Leiden, which her husband, Franciscus Raphelengius I (1539-1597), had run relatively independently since the fall of Antwerp. The heirs also agreed that Jeanne Rivière should remain on all the title pages as long as she lived. The imprint in this period usually read "ex *Officina Plantiniana*, apud viduam, & Joannem Moretum" (at the Plantin Press, by the widow [of Christophe Plantin] and Jan Moretus).

After taking over Plantin's printing office, Jan Moretus secured his father-in-law's privileges. Christophe Plantin had acquired important and lucrative privileges thanks to his good public connections. These patents gave him the exclusive right to print and distribute Bibles, liturgical texts and the works of classical authors. After Plantin's death, competitors in Antwerp were quick to snatch up certain privileges. Jan Moretus entered the fray with varying degrees of success.

In the twenty years that Jan Moretus ran the Plantin Press, he published about 640 editions. He published works on history and humanism, but half of his publications were of a religious nature. Even more than his father-in-law, Justus Lipsius was the most successful author. Jan Moretus published no less than 62 works by this humanist. He distinguished himself even more than his predecessor by the quality of his printing. He made careful typography and correct text as the trademark of the Plantin Press. Jan Moretus also differentiated the quality of the paper, printing part of the edition on luxury paper. For the illustrations in his editions, he relied heavily on refined copper engravings. Unlike the coarser woodcuts, copper plates were printed on a separate type of press, which the Plantin Press did not have. Jan Moretus therefore formed a strategic alliance with the Galle family. The marriage of his daughter Catharina (°1580) to the engraver and publisher Theodor Galle (1571-1633) formalised the existing cooperation between the printing office and the printing workshop. The close family relationship between the Moretus and Galle families lasted for half a century.

Two sons of Jan and Martine helped their father in the Plantin Press. Balthasar Moretus I (1574-1641) wrote Neolatine poetry at an early age. He studied for a time with Justus Lipsius at the University of Leuven. Balthasar helped his father prepare and correct texts in the printing office. He was born with paralysis of the right side. His younger brother Jan Moretus II (1576-1618) helped their father with sales in the bookshop. After the death of Jan Moretus I in 1610, his widow, Martine Plantin, took over the business. She delegated day-to-day management to her two sons and remained on board as a silent partner. In 1614, Balthasar and Jan II bought out their mother. They established a partnership, with Balthasar running the printing office in De Gulden Passer on the

Peter Paul Rubens (designer) & Theodore Galle (engraver), Adoration by the Magi, in: *Missale Romanum*, Antwerp, widow and sons of Jan Moretus I, 1613, 2o (2 161).

Vrijdagmarkt and Jan II managing sales from the bookshop in the Kammenstraat.

The sudden death of Jan Moretus II in 1618 came as a shock. Balthasar Moretus I, probably because of his physical disability, felt unable to run the Plantin Press on his own. He therefore invited his brother-in-law Jan van Meurs (1582-1652) to take over his late brother's role. This Antwerp publisher was married to the sister of Jan II's widow, Maria de Sweert (1588-1655). The partnership, with Balthasar Moretus and Jan van Meurs as working partners and his sister-in-law Maria de Sweert as a silent partner, lasted for several years but ended in a family dispute in 1629. Balthasar Moretus I continued to run the Plantin Press on his own, assisted from 1632 by his nephew Balthasar Moretus II (1615-1674). Balthasar Moretus I enlarged De Gulden Passer in two phases, adding wings in Flemish Renaissance style. The extension defines the current view of the courtyard garden.

Under Balthasar Moretus I, the Plantin Press was renowned for its beautifully crafted Baroque books. The famous Baroque painter Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) produced numerous designs for engraved title pages and other book illustrations from 1613. Rubens was a childhood friend of Balthasar's. As well as book illustrations, he also commissioned dozens of portraits of family members and authors from his studio. These portraits still hang in the commissioner's home after all these centuries. Rubens' designs, engraved in the Galle family studio, raised the quality of the illustrations to an unparalleled level. The beautifully crafted missals and breviaries from the time of

Balthasar I Moretus illustrate the collaboration between artist, engraver and publisher. During the reign of Balthasar Moretus I, the Plantin Press also became the main supplier of liturgical books to the Spanish market. The *Officina Plantiniana* printed the mass books in Antwerp and sent them in large quantities to Bilbao and Seville. From these ports, the Hieronymites distributed the books throughout Spain and its colonies. Gradually, the Spanish market became an important and constant source of income for the Plantin Press. But the domestic market for liturgical books was also important. In 1641, uncle and nephew Balthasar Moretus I and II succeeded in having the ancestral Plantinian privileges reaffirmed, thus excluding their Antwerp competitors from the liturgical market forever.

The day after the death of Balthasar Moretus I in 1641, the Privy Council transferred the Plantinian privileges to his nephew and successor, Balthasar II Moretus. His uncle had previously described him as the only hope for the survival of the Plantin Press. Young Balthasar had only one brother, Jan Moretus III (1610-1663), who was mentally disabled. In 1645, Balthasar Moretus II married Anna Goos (1627-1691), a member of a wealthy Antwerp family, when she was nearly eighteen. The couple had twelve children, eight of whom survived to adulthood. Under Balthasar Moretus II, printing at the Plantin Press reached its peak in the seventeenth century. He published one last series of scientific and humanistic texts before completely reversing his publishing strategy. Gradually, he narrowed the once broad range of publications of his predecessors until only liturgical editions remained. By becoming a niche publisher, he sought to minimise the risk to the family business. Specialisation also lowered the bar for his successor. An exhaustive knowledge of the early modern book trade was no longer a requirement. Balthasar Moretus II was well aware of the challenge of transferring the family business to the next generation. During his lifetime he wrote three different sets of instructions for his future widow and heirs to prepare for the transfer. The instructions read like a "how to run the *Officina Plantiniana* for dummies".

When Balthasar II Moretus died in 1674, his widow, Anna Goos, made her own decisions about the transition to the next generation. She did not organise a liquidation auction for booksellers, as her late husband had advised in his instructions. Instead, she sold the stock of printed books in bulk through private agreements with a number of booksellers at home and abroad. From 1676 Anna negotiated with her eldest son, Balthasar Moretus III (1646-1696), for a consortium or acquisition. After five years of negotiations, mother and son reached an agreement. Balthasar III Moretus took over the Plantin Press, except for the outstanding debts of the booksellers. Anna did not lose sight of the interests of her minor children and herself. Melchior Moretus (1661-1693) had the right to join his eldest brother in an association. Anna herself retained the right to buy back books from her son on the same terms. She clearly intended to remain active in the book trade.

Balthasar Moretus III consolidated his father's strategic shift. For the next generations, the *Officina Plantiniana* remained a niche publisher of liturgical editions, although it continued to print the ordinances of the Antwerp City Council until 1705. With Balthasar III, the Moretus family climbed further up the social ladder. He was the first of his family to make a Grand Tour to Italy. This trip set a trend for his descendants. More importantly, Balthasar Moretus III managed to enter the peerage. From 1692, he and his descendants were allowed to use the title of "jonkheer" ("esquire"). He himself enjoyed this privilege for only a few years. When Balthasar Moretus III died in 1696, a few days short of his fif-

Jacob van Reesbroeck, Portrait of Balthasar Moretus II, 1659 (MPM.V.IV.043).

tieth birthday, his widow ensured continuity. Anna Maria de Neuf (1654-1714) ran the *Officina Plantiniana* for more than a decade while she waited for her sons to come of age. Her eldest son, Balthasar Moretus IV (1679-1730), joined the family business in 1707. The youngest son, Joannes Jacobus Moretus (1690-1757), did not join until two years after his mother's death, when he had returned from his Grand Tour and married Theresa Mathilde Schilders (1696-1729).

From the sixth generation onwards, the long-established Plantin Press systematically lost its importance in the composition of the family's wealth. The Moretuses married women from the upper echelons of the urban elite, bringing with them considerable dowries. Balthasar IV, and especially Joannes Jacobus Moretus, also managed to increase their wealth considerably through lucrative investments in international trading companies. Name any trading company in the eighteenth century and the Moretuses were shareholders: the Ostend Company, the Swedish and Danish East India Companies, the Trieste and Fiume Companies, and so on. It is therefore not surprising that Joannes Jacobus saw an opportunity in the South Sea Company. As its share price soared to unprecedented heights, he and his father-in-law travelled to London in May 1720 to survey their investment in the enslaved people trade. Later that year, the South Sea Bubble turned out to be the biggest financial scandal and bubble of the eighteenth century.

Like the first generation, Joannes Jacobus Moretus saw the profitable prospects of the lace trade. He exported locally produced lace to Spain. The Moretus family also built up a huge real estate portfolio. In the nineteenth century, the Moretuses continued their ancestors' family business purely for the sake of the tradition and fame of the *Officina Plantiniana*. The family's wealth no longer depended on the Plantin Press. In 1642, Balthasar Moretus II estimated the value of the family estate at nearly 160,000 Carolus guilders. When his daughter-in-law Anna Maria de Neuf died in 1714, she left her heirs 760,000 guilders. Her youngest son, Joannes Jacobus Moretus, managed to increase his inheritance to almost 2 million guilders by 1755.

While their ancestors learned the book trade on the shop floor, members of the Moretus family studied at the universities of Leuven and Douai. They were also apprenticed to merchant companies in Ostend. François Moretus (1760-1814) even became a partner in the international trading company De Gruijtters, Solvijns & Compagnie after his apprenticeship. His uncle Joannes Josephus Moretus (1727-1806) combined the Grand Tour with visits to the company's factories in Trieste and Fiume on the Adriatic coast. In Antwerp, his elder brother Franciscus Joannes Moretus (1717-1768) extended the city palace on the Vrijdagmarkt with a new wing in the neoclassical style. Franciscus Joannes died shortly after the construction of the front façade. His widow, Maria Theresa Borrekens (1728-1797), ran the Plantin Press and managed the family's investments portfolio for almost thirty years. In the last years of her life, she witnessed key political moments in the Austrian Netherlands, such as the Brabant Revolution (1789) and the French occupation after the French Revolution (1795). After the loss of their privileged position in the Spanish market in 1764, the activities of the Plantin Press gradually declined. The French revolutionary period made life difficult for the aristocratic printers of liturgical books. Several members of the Moretus family fled with their families to the Republic and later to German territories. It was not until after the turn of the century that the fugitive Moretuses returned to Antwerp. Their mother, Maria Theresa Borrekens, meanwhile had passed away. Her three unmarried sons ran the printing office during the Napoleonic period. There were long periods

Anonymous, Portrait of Anna Maria de Neuf, [1680-1699] (MPM.V.IV.122).

of inactivity at the Plantin Press. One of the three brothers' cousins, Albert Moretus (1795-1865), relaunched the printing business in 1828, investing in new typefaces. The relaunch was short-lived, and within a few years the business was in decline again. When Albert Moretus died in 1865, his youngest brother, Edward Moretus (1804-1880), made a last but half-hearted attempt to bring the Plantin Press out of its lethargy. After publishing a few thin liturgical supplements, the presses were shut down for ever. Albert and Edward Moretus did not live in the city palace on the Vrijdagmarkt. They preferred their residences elsewhere in the city or in rural Ekeren to De Gulden Passer. In the meantime, society became increasingly aware of the heritage value of the Vrijdagmarkt. In 1876, the Antwerp City Council finally persuaded Edward Moretus to sell the stately building and all its contents to the city and the Belgian government. The city appointed Max Rooses (1839-1914) as curator, and in August 1877 the Plantin-Moretus Museum opened its doors. The newly appointed curator immediately set about organising and opening the Plantin-Moretus archives. This was the beginning of a new chapter for the archives.

The documentary heritage of three centuries of printing

The archives of the *Officina Plantiniana* are the result of three centuries of activity, documenting the functioning of an early modern printing and publishing house. The archives are certainly unique for the sixteenth century. Fragments of the archives of other publishing houses of the period have survived only very sporadically. By contrast, the Plantin-Moretus archives stand out for the size and importance of the company, as well as for their incredible completeness. The company archives reveal three centuries of activity in all aspects of the book trade, with an unimaginable wealth of detailed and accurate data. For the history of printing in the early modern period, the *Officina Plantiniana* archives are an obvious and widely used source. But the archives are also highly relevant to other fields of study. As the leading publisher of the Counter-Reformation, the archives are a valuable source for church historians. Researchers in the history of science and humanism also highly value the archives. In addition, the archives reflect the socio-economic development and key political moments of the early modern Low Countries. The archives are also the place to be for the study of international cultural life in the second half of the sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth.

Simplified outline of the Plantin-Moretus archives:

1. Officina Plantiniana
- 1.1 Correspondence
- 1.2 Accounting
- 1.3 Printing
- 1.4 Deeds and legal documents
- 1.5 Other commercial activities

2. Families
- 2.1 Plantin and Moretus families
- 2.2 Related families
- 2.3 Commercial relations

The key collection for these areas of study is the extensive correspondence. The business archives contain over 150 collections of incoming letters from authors, authorities, booksellers and other customers. The letters provide a special insight into the internal book production process, from the proposal of a book project to the sale of the finished product. Due to the interweaving of family and business, the content is not limited to business. The Amsterdam paper merchants Levinus (1640-1688) and IJsbrand Vincent (1641-1718) maintained an intense correspondence with three genera-

Philip Joseph Tassaert, Portrait of Maria Theresa Borrekens, 1762 (MPM.V.IV.086).

The old printing workshop.

tions of the Moretus family for more than half a century. The purchase of paper remained the common thread in the correspondence, but the content gradually broadened. The two families became good friends and provided each other with all kinds of services. Amsterdam was the trading hub of the world. The Vincents shipped all kinds of consumer goods and luxuries to the Moretuses in Antwerp, from freshly smoked salmon to two pairs of ice skates for the sons of Balthasar Moretus III. They regularly stayed with each other. IJsbrand Vincent was also a trustee and playwright of the literary society *Nil volentibus arduum* in Amsterdam. He sent his own poems to the Moretuses with the request that they be set to music by an unnamed Antwerp composer.

In the numerous letters received by Christophe Plantin and the Moretuses the senders are on speaking terms. In addition, the *Officina Plantiniana* archives also contain a series of 55 copybooks and collections of drafts and transcripts of outgoing letters. This allows us to compare the two directions of correspondence, and we often know the replies. Plantin kept drafts and transcripts of the letters he sent. Spurred on by his grandson, Balthasar I Moretus, this series was turned into copybooks with an index of the names of the senders. One of the priorities of curator Max Rooses after the opening of the Museum Plantin-Moretus was the publication of Christophe Plantin's letters. The first volume was published in 1883, and after Roose's death, his successor, Jan Denucé (1878-1944), continued the series. For some years now, this source publication has also been accessible online, as the Bodleian Library in Oxford has included it in its *Early Modern Letters Online* platform.

Christophe Plantin's letters provide a rare and unique insight into the challenges of a sixteenth-century publisher. In a letter to Francisco Torres dated 3 February 1576, Plantin responded to some of the author's complaints. The theologian feared that Plantin would print only the Latin translation of Pope Clement I's works and not the original Greek text. On the other hand, Plantin did not want to wait until Torres had personally checked the printed commentaries on the works of this first-century church father. After all, Torres was in Rome, and it would be a waste of time to send the quires back and forth. It is clear from this discussion that the publisher and the author had different interests.

The letters are rich in words, but also in information. It is therefore a great privilege that the accounts have survived almost in their entirety. The *Officina Plantiniana* kept several sets of ledgers, depending on the type of client. Booksellers, authors and important private and institutional clients had their own account in one of the 59 ledgers. Every few years, the *Officina Plantiniana* would draw up a balance sheet. After liquidating the outstanding account, the *Officina* would open a new account for the customer. A letter code from A to G indicated the discount granted, which could be up to thirty per cent for the best customers. Details of transactions were recorded in chronological order in the journals of the book trade. Sometimes the annotation would begin with "estant present en Anvers", and then you would know that the customer had physically visited the Plantin bookshop that day.

From 1563 to 1567, Christophe Plantin exceptionally kept Italian double-entry bookkeeping. During this period, he worked in association and was accountable to the silent partners. Plantin reported all kinds of data on the *Officina*'s activities in auxiliary registers. His partner, Cornelis van Bomberghen, processed the data provided by Plantin in the two central parts of the Italian accounting system. Only during this short period did Plantin keep a ledger for each edition. In this ledger, each edition of the *Officina Plantiniana* had its own account in which Plantin grouped all the costs associated with production. These included the cost of preparing the text, the production of illustrations, the purchase of paper, payments to typesetters and printers, and even the number of copies. Researchers on the cost accounting of book production are thrilled with this ledger and regret that Plantin did not continue the series after the association ceased.

For publishers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Frankfurt Book Fair was an indispensable event. Twice a year, in Lent and in September, Christophe Plantin and later the Moretuses took part in the Frankfurt Book Fair. They rented a bookshop and warehouse in the Buchgasse. If they did not travel to Frankfurt themselves, an agent represented the *Officina Plantiniana* at the book fair. Because of its importance, the *Officina* kept separate accounts of the transactions it undertook at the fair. At the heart of these were the 94 "Cahiers de Francfort". The cahiers listed which books each trading partner had bought and delivered, and how much it all cost. They often included at the front the invoice for the tonnes of books sent to Frankfurt, and at the back the inventory of books left in their Frankfurt shop after the fair. Plantin started the series in 1565, but it was not until 1586 that the cahiers were kept continuously. When the Thirty Years' War made travelling in Germany too dangerous in the 1630s, the Moretuses gradually ceased their physical presence in Frankfurt. At the book fair, the *Officina* traded with booksellers from England to Latvia. Scholars from all over Europe study the transactions in the cahiers to find out which books booksellers from their countries of origin offered and brought home.

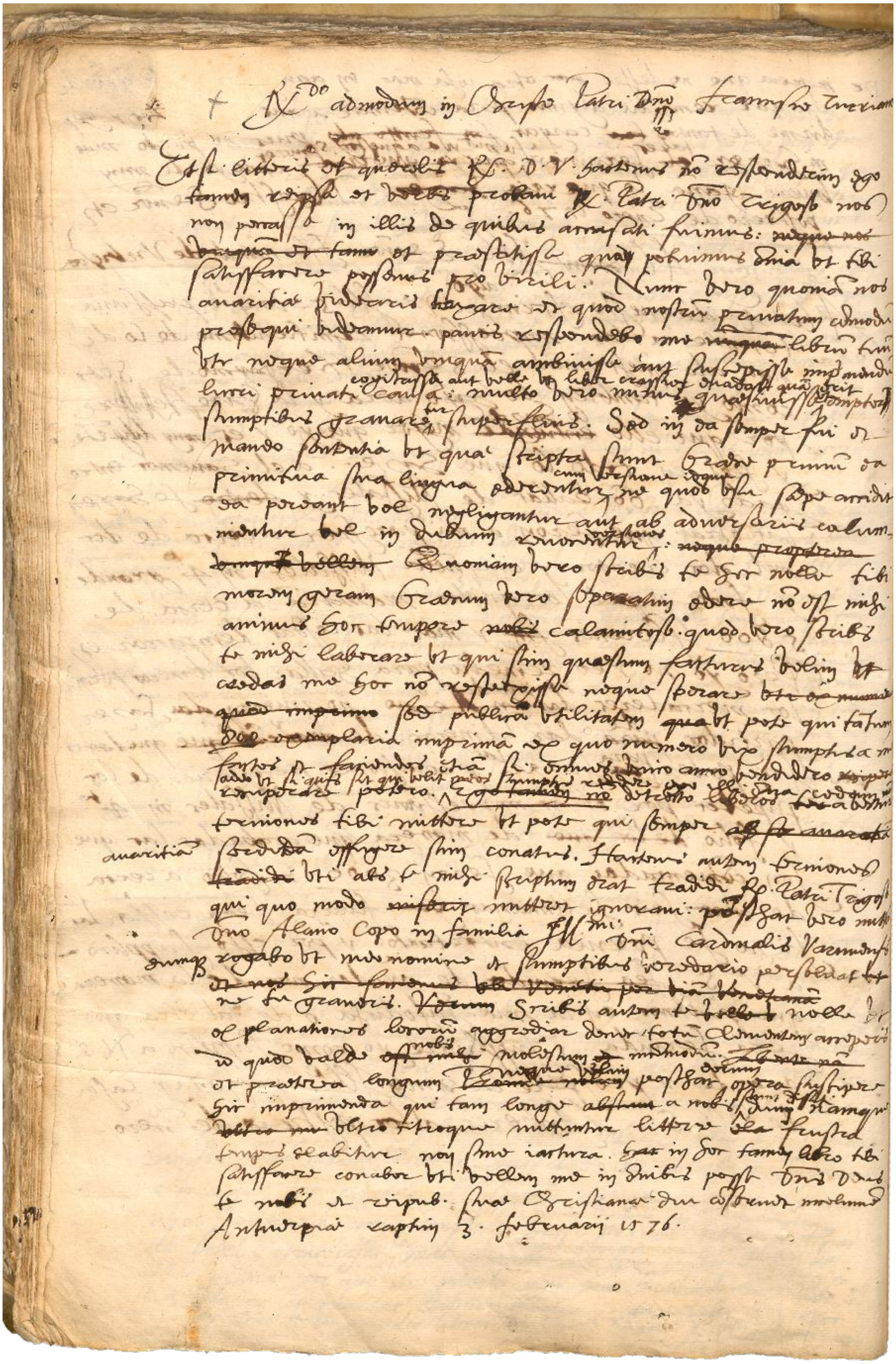
The 141 journals of the book trade and the 94 "Cahiers de Francfort" also listed the selling prices of books. For booksellers and publishers, detailed prices were valuable market information. For this reason, the *Officina Plantiniana* produced catalogues as commercial tools for internal use, collecting editions from competing publishers with their detailed prices. The most important and complete catalogue is manuscript M 296, which reveals around 20,000 editions and their detailed prices. The editions in this manuscript were published throughout Europe between 1530 and 1595 and are sorted by city. Thanks to the *Early Modern Book Prices* database of the EMoBookTrade project, these book prices are also online available and searchable in open access.

The Latin title "Prototypographus Regius" (royal arch-printer) was not an empty term. By order of King Philip II, Christophe Plantin issued certificates to his fellow printers in the Low Countries. Only recognised printers were allowed to continue their trade. Plantin carried out the king's order with a great sense of duty. In the certificate for his Antwerp colleague Jan Verwithagen, Plantin stated that Verwithagen "appeared before me and [...] was found to be very skilled in all forms of book printing, fluent in Latin, Dutch and a little French, and able to read and set Greek". The certification of printers saddled Plantin with a mountain of extra work at a time when his presses were working overtime. The business archives of the *Officina Plantiniana* contain drafts of the certificates drawn up by Plantin. The drafts contain unique biographical and professional information about the master printers and fellow printers who lived and worked in the Netherlands in the early 1570s.

Privileges allowed publishers to protect their publications from copying. In this charter, the authorities granted a monopoly to a publisher or author to print and sell a specific book within the territory of the granting body for a certain period of time. The business archives contain hundreds of privileges granted to the Plantin Press. The parchment privileges often have an impressive but fragile wax seal. The extensive set of privileges is a unique source for the study of the legal aspects of early modern publishing. Like the editors of the time, today's researchers extract legal information from the summaries of privileges that publishers printed in their editions. Research shows that the information in the printed summaries is often unreliable. In his application for a privilege for the Dutch translation of the Bible, Christophe Plantin referred to the privilege previously held by his Antwerp rival Hans de Laet (c. 1525- c. 1567). In fact, De Laet never had this privilege. In his editions, he merely referred to an expired privilege granted to the Leuven printer Anthoni Maria Bergaigne. Plantin himself was thus being deceived. A comparative study of the original privileges and the printed summaries shows that the creative summary of the privileges paid off.

A special part of the accounts includes the personnel costs of the Plantin Press. The printers and typesetters were paid per delivery. They worked six days a week and were paid on Saturday for the previous week's work. In the series of eleven journeymen's ledgers, each printer's companion and typesetter had his own account. The master printer would record the amounts in the journeymen's accounts week by week. He also listed the quires they had set or printed, with a brief reference to the author, title and format of the edition. The process of producing editions can be meticulously reconstructed from the workmen's books. The entries show who typeset or printed which section and when. Sometimes production stopped, only to resume after a pause of several weeks or months. The series of journeymen's ledgers runs without interruption from the foundation of the association in 1563 to 1800.

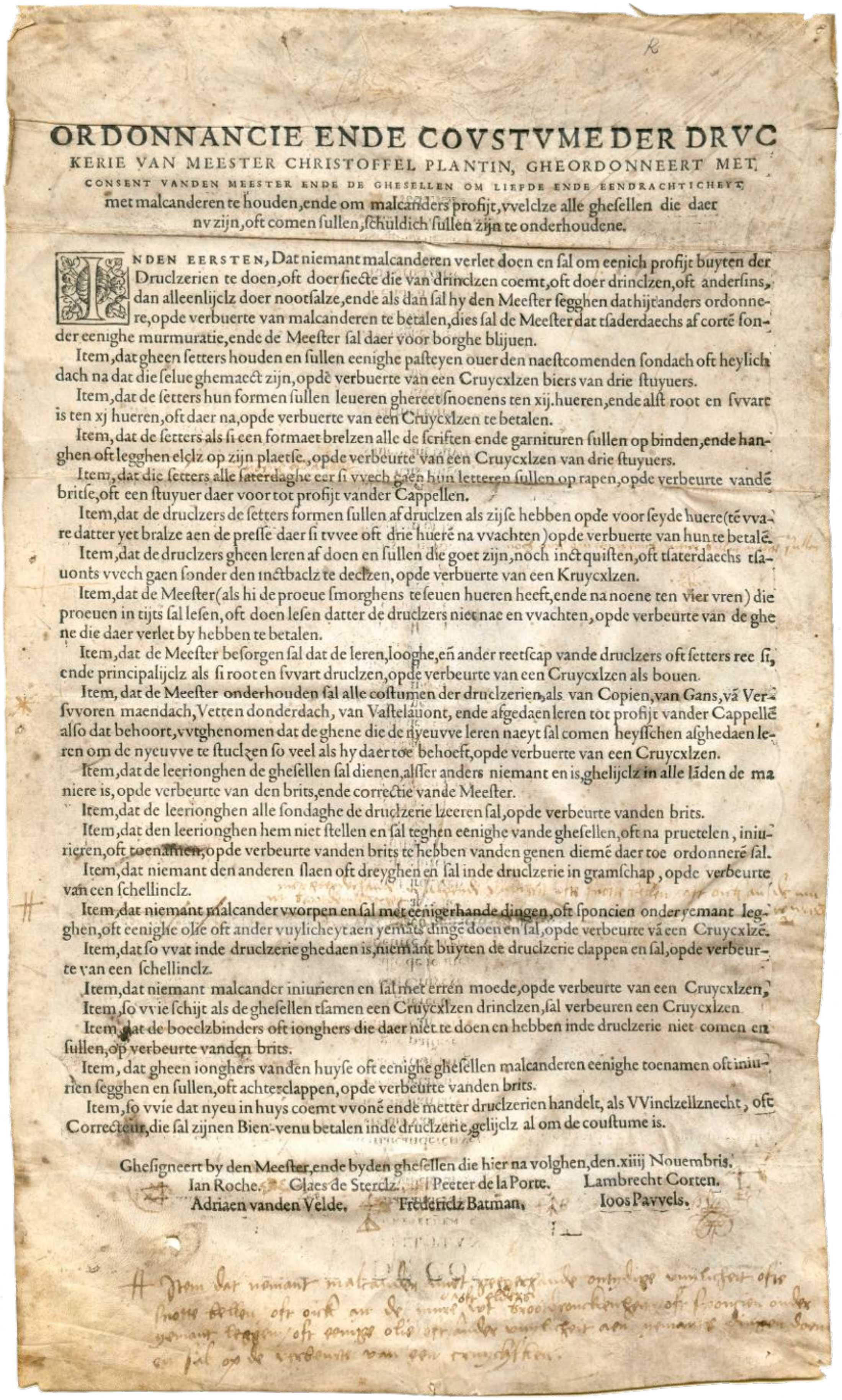
A second set of payroll records presents the same information in a completely different structure. The so-called "sepmaines des compagnons" or "memorials of weekly payments" contain weekly payments to printers and typesetters. Week by week, the journeymen are listed by name along with the weekly wages they received. As the memorials cover a period of more than two centuries, the series is an excellent source for research into the wage policy of an early modern printing office. In 1653, a health service for the workers was established within the *Officina Plantiniana*. It provided financial



Draft letter from Christophe Plantin to Francisco Torres, 3 February 1576 (MPM Arch. 8, fol. 174 verso).

Privilege granted by the Privy Council to Gerard Mercator for his map of the world (mappa universalis) for the period of 10 years, 22 May 1569 (MPM Arch. 1179, no. 103).

assistance to its sick members and to the families of deceased members. The aid was financed by fines and contributions from the master and the journeymen. On the occasion of its foundation, the statutes of the Health Box were written in calligraphic script and signed by all the workmen of the time. By placing the Health Box journals next to the "sepmaines", it is possible to answer research questions about absenteeism and careers at the time of retirement. In addition, the memorials sometimes contained accounts showing the costs of typesetting and printing of all editions, together with the number of copies printed. Gradually, other expenses and income related to printing were included in the weekly payments of the journeymen. From 1638 to 1676, the memorials also contained at the end short biographical notes on the journeymen.


ORDONNANCIE ENDE COVSTVME DER DRVC KERIE VAN MEESTER CHRISTOFFEL PLANTIN, GHEORDONNEERT MET CONSENT VANDEN MEESTER ENDE DE GHESELLEN OM LIEFDE ENDE EENDRACHTICHEYT met malcanderen te houden, ende om malcanders profijt, vvelcke alle ghesellen die daer nv zijn, oft comen ſullen, ſchuldich ſullen zijn te onderhoudene.

INDEN EERSTEN, Dat niemant malcanderen verlet doen en ſal om eenich profijt buyten der Druckerien te doen, oft doer ſiecte die van drincken coemt, oft doer drincken, oft anderſins, dan alleenlijck doer nootſake, ende als dan ſal hy den Meeſter ſegghen dat hijt anders ordonnere, opde verbuerte van malcanderen te betalen, dies ſal de Meeſter dat tſaderdaechs af corté ſonder eenighe murmuratie, ende de Meeſter ſal daer voor borghe blijuen.

Item, dat gheen ſetters houden en ſullen eenighe paſteyen ouer den naeſtcomenden ſondach oft heylich dach na dat die ſelue ghemaect zijn, opdē verbuerte van een Cruycxken biers van drie ſtuyuers.

Item, dat de ſetters hun formen ſullen leueren ghereet ſnoenens ten xij. hueren, ende alſt root en ſvvart is ten xj hueren, oft daer na, opde verbuerte van een Cruycxken te betalen.

Item, dat de ſetters als ſi een formaet breken alle de ſcriften ende garnituren ſullen op binden, ende hanghen oft legghen elck op zijn plaetſe, opde verbeurte van een Cruycxken van drie ſtuyuers.

Item, dat die ſetters alle ſaterdaghe eer ſi vvech gaen hun letteren ſullen op rapen, opde verbeurte vandē britſe, oft een ſtuyuer daer voor tot profijt vander Cappellen.

Item, dat de druckers de ſetters formen ſullen af drucken als zijſe hebben opde voor ſeyde huere (tē vvare datter yet brake aen de preſſe daer ſi tvvee oft drie huerē na vvachten) opde verbuerte van hun te betalē.

Item, dat de druckers gheen leren af doen en ſullen die goet zijn, noch inct quiſten, oft tſaterdaechs tſauonts vvech gaen ſonder den inctback te decken, opde verbuerte van een Kruycxken.

Item, dat de Meeſter (als hi de proeue ſmorghens te ſeuen hueren heeft, ende na noene ten vier vren) die proeuen in tijts ſal leſen, oft doen leſen datter de druckers niet nae en vvachten, opde verbeurte van de ghene die daer verlet by hebben te betalen.

Item, dat de Meeſter beſorgen ſal dat de leren, looghe, eñ ander reetſcap vande druckers oft ſetters ree ſi, ende principalijck als ſi root en ſvvart drucken, opde verbeurte van een Cruycxken als bouen.

Item, dat de Meeſter onderhouden ſal alle coſtumen der druckerien, als van Copien, van Gans, vā Verſvvoren maendach, Vetten donderdach, van Vaſtelauont, ende afgedaen leren tot profijt vander Cappellē alſo dat behoort, vvtghenomen dat de ghene die de nyeuvve leren naeyt ſal comen heyſſchen afghedaen leren om de nyeuvve te ſtucken ſo veel als hy daer toe behoeft, opde verbuerte van een Cruycxken.

Item, dat de leerionghen de gheſellen ſal dienen, alſſer anders niemant en is, ghelijck in alle lāden de maniere is, opde verbeurte van den brits, ende correctie vande Meeſter.

Item, dat de leerionghen alle ſondaghe de druckerie keeren ſal, opde verbeurte vanden brits.

Item, dat den leerionghen hem niet ſtellen en ſal teghen eenighe vande gheſellen, oft na pruetelen, iniurieren, oft toenamen, opde verbeurte vanden brits te hebben vanden genen diemē daer toe ordonnerē ſal.

Item, dat niemant den anderen ſlaen oft dreyghen en ſal inde druckerie in gramſchap, opde verbeurte van een ſchellinck.

Item, dat niemant malcander vvorpen en ſal met eenigerhande dingen, oft ſponcien onder yemant legghen, oft eenighe olie oft ander vuylicheyt aen yemāts dingē doen en ſal, opde verbeurte vā een Cruycxkē.

Item, dat ſo vvat inde druckerie ghedaen is, niemant buyten de druckerie clappen en ſal, opde verbeurte van een ſchellinck.

Item, dat niemant malcander iniurieren en ſal met erren moede, opde verbeurte van een Cruycxken.

Item, ſo vvie ſchijt als de gheſellen tſamen een Cruycxken drincken, ſal verbeuren een Cruycxken

Item, dat de boeckbinders oft ionghers die daer niet te doen en hebben inde druckerie niet comen en ſullen, op verbeurte vanden brits.

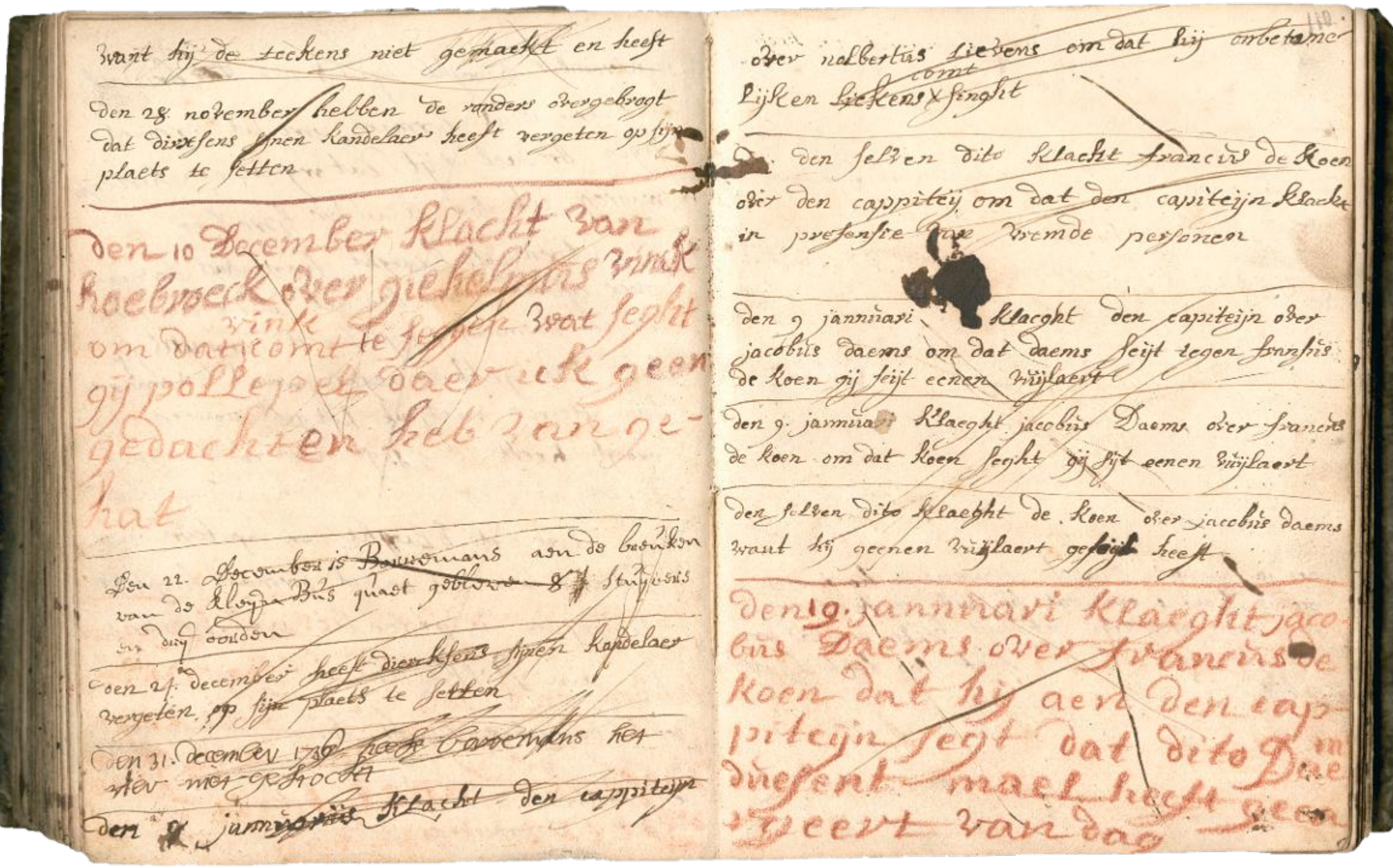
Item, dat gheen ionghers vanden huyſe oft eenighe gheſellen malcanderen eenighe toenamen oft iniurien ſegghen en ſullen, oft achterclappen, opde verbeurte vanden brits.

Item, ſo vvie dat nyeu in huys coemt vvonē ende metter druckerien handelt, als VVinckelknecht, oft Correcteur, die ſal zijnen Bien-venu betalen inde druckerie, gelijck al om de couſtume is.

Gheſigneert by den Meeſter, ende byden gheſellen die hier na volghen, den. xiiij Nouembris.

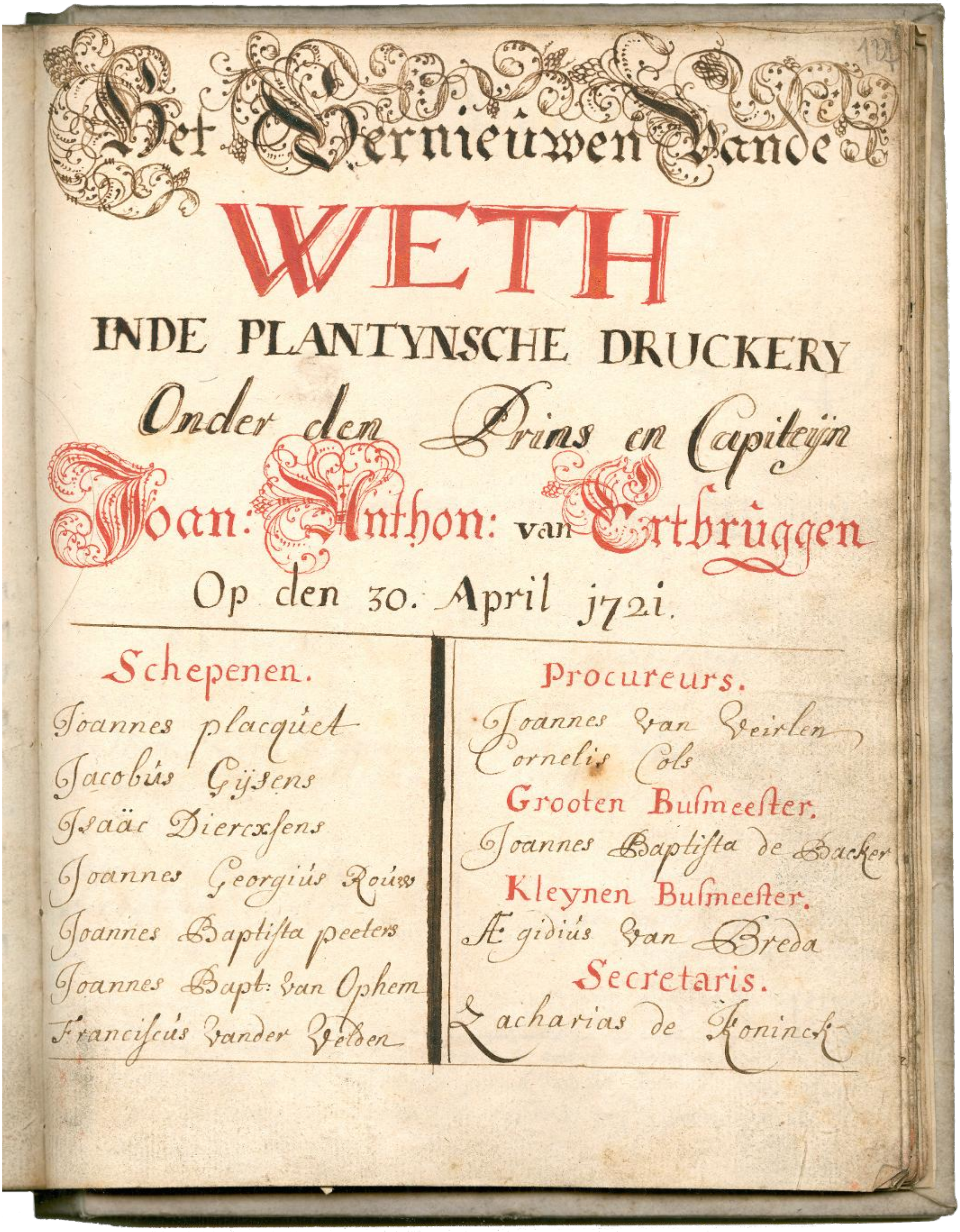
Ian Roche. Claes de Sterck. Peeter de la Porte. Lambrecht Corten.
Adriaen vanden Velde. Frederick Batman. Ioos Pavvels.

Ordonnancie ende coustume der druckerie van meester Christoffel Plantin, Antwerp, c. 1555 (2 4).



Opening from the book of complaints 1713-1769 (MPM Arch. 264, fol. 109 verso - 110 recto).

The working conditions at the Plantin Press are very well documented. From the very beginning, Christophe Plantin made sure that the rights and duties of his workers were clearly displayed. In the year he founded his printing office, he had a set of labour regulations printed. The business archives contain a copy of this first "Ordinance of the Plantin Press" from 1555. What is remarkable about it is that it is a proof printed on parchment. The purpose of this document, in addition to the recording of daily work processes, was to enforce discipline on the shop floor. Apparently, the journeymen liked to play practical jokes with each other. The regulation explicitly prohibited a whole range of jokes, such as greasing a colleague's tool with oil or other dirt or putting a sponge under someone's bottom. On the printed copy, it was conveniently added that it was also forbidden to rub snot bubbles on the walls. The offender had to treat a jug of beer. Corporal punishment was reserved for apprentice boys. They would were caned if, for example, they failed to sweep the printing office on Sundays. Over the next few years, Plantin had four more sets of labour regulations printed and displayed on the wall of the printing office. In the later regulations, beer was replaced by a fine for the benefit of the Chapel. To enforce discipline, Plantin had established an internal workers' association. From the seventeenth century onwards, this "chapel" of the *Officina Plantiniana* itself issued new rules. It is very likely that the new rules were based on incidents that had occurred in the printing office. For example, from 1632 it was forbidden to pee against the gate of the printing office. Sometimes the Plantin Press seemed to be ahead of its time. In 1641, for example, the


Het Vernieüwen Vande
WETH
INDE PLANTYNSCHE DRUCKERY
Onder den Prins en Capiteyn
Joan: Anthon: van Ertbrüggen
Op den 30. April 1721.

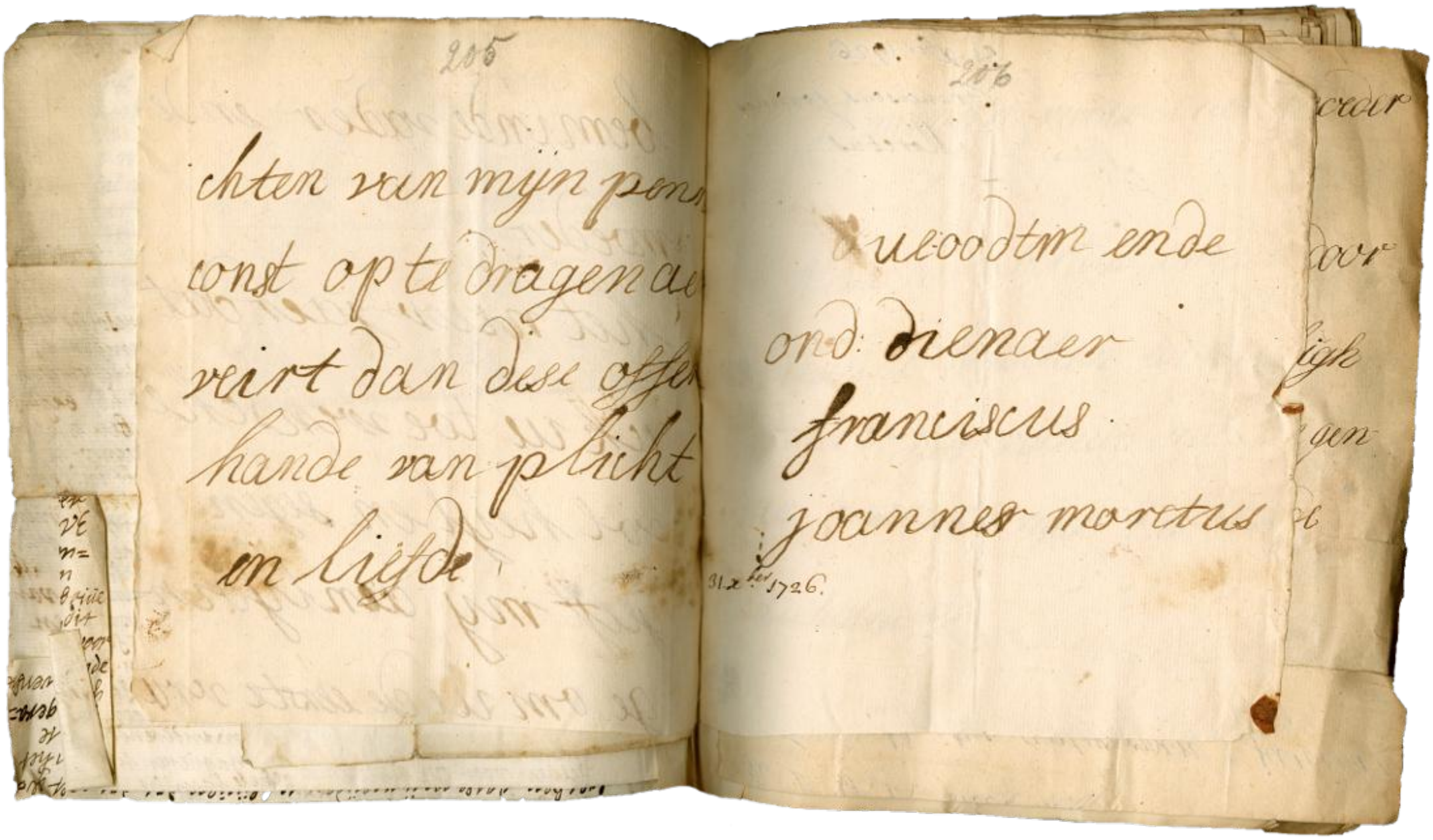
Schepenen.	Procureurs.
Joannes placqüet	Joannes van Veirlen
Jacobüs Gijsens	Cornelis Cols
Isaäc Diercxsens	Grooten Busmeester.
Joannes Georgiüs Roüw	Joannes Baptista de Backer
Joannes Baptista peeters	Kleynen Busmeester.
Joannes Bapt: van Ophem	Ægidiüs van Breda
Franciscüs vander Velden	Secretaris.
	Zacharias de Koninck

Renewing the Law, 1721 (MPM Arch. 334, fol. 127 recto).

printing assistants and typesetters had a smoke-free workplace. The same rule also banished the roasting of herring on the printing-house stove. The journeymen were not bothered by the unpleasant smell of fried fish.

At the time of the Moretuses, violations of labour regulations were recorded in the complaint book. Mutual accusations between journeymen were also recorded in the complaint book. The three complaint books provide a unique and colourful insight into daily life at the Plantin Press. Thanks to the principle of complaint and refutation, entire discussions between workers can be reconstructed. They show that alcohol was already a problem on the shop floor. Despite numerous and repeated complaints about drunkenness, Andries d'Hondt continued to work as a printer

Dominicus Vermanden, Sample card with six lace samples, 1737 (MPM Arch. 1214-1215, vol. 2, no. 18).


205
chten van mijn pon
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206
ueodtm ende
ond: dienaer
franciscus
joannes moretus
31 xber 1726.

New Year's letter from Franciscus Joannes Moretus to his parents, 31 December 1726 (MPM Arch. 609, pp. 205-206).

for many years. In 1721, for example, Andries d'Hondt reproached his fellow printer Francis vande Velde for not having a nicely shaped face. Vande Velde replied that d'Hondt had been drinking brandy since eight o'clock in the morning. As a result, the drunken d'Hondt was distracting the printers and had not yet lifted a foot himself. D'Hondt admitted that he had drunk two pints of brandy but excused himself. According to d'Hondt, he had pain in his intestines because he had not been able to go to the toilet for three days. His stomach felt like a rock. Van de Velde replied amusingly that d'Hondt's illness was well known among the fellow-workers: pain in the arms in the morning, pain in the intestines after noon. This exchange is closely related to d'Hondt's favourite insult: "I shit on you".

Every three months, the Chapel's board met to discuss the complaints recorded. This board, known as the Law, fined the offenders if the complaints were found to be justified. The Law was elected annually by the workers of the *Officina Plantiniana*. As a final act of governance, the outgoing secretary signed the new composition of the Law. The composition of the new council was obviously inspired by the annual renewal of the Antwerp City Council. Only the president of the Chapel was not elected by his colleagues but appointed by the master of De Gulden Passer. This captain or prince acted as the master's first point of contact and thus fulfilled the role of foreman in the printing office.

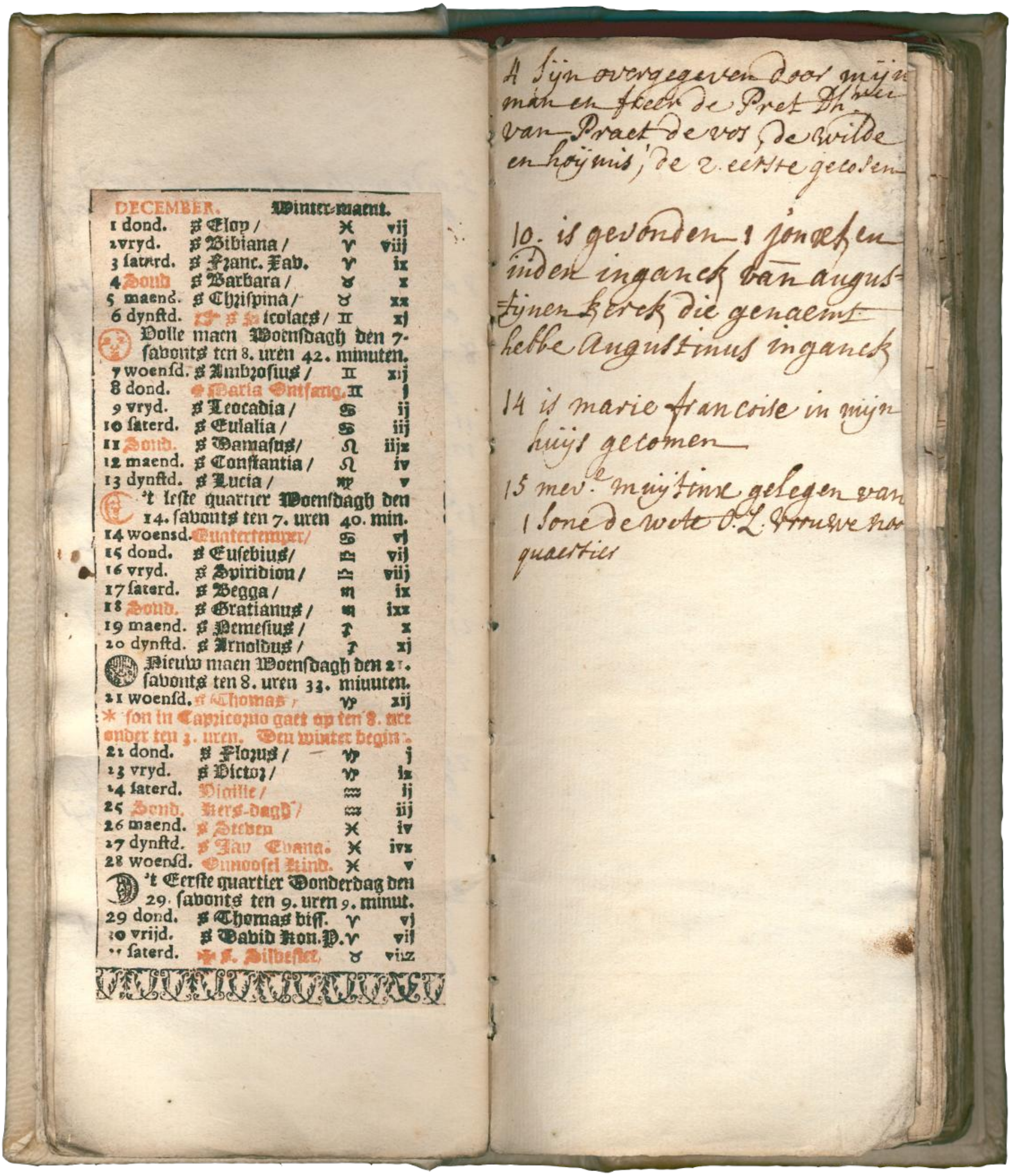
The family as a driving force

Printing and publishing were the main activities of the family business, but they were not the only ones. Christophe Plantin differentiated the business activities from the foundation of the *Officina Plantiniana*. This diversification provided a steady stream of income to support the capital-intensive publishing business. Thanks to his good contacts in Paris, Plantin traded in lace and lingerie. He ordered lace from home-based lace manufacturers in Antwerp and the surrounding area. He delivered this Brabant lace to the Paris lace merchant Pierre Gassen. Gradually, Plantin involved members of his family in the running of the business. The daughters Martine (1550-1616) and Cathérine (1553-1622) helped their father in the lace business as early teenagers. At the age of twelve, Cathérine was already working as an agent in the lace trade. At the age of fourteen, she travelled alone to Mechelen to pay for finished orders and to give new orders to lace makers. She married Jean Gassen -a cousin of the lace merchant Pierre Gassen- and moved to Paris. At the age of seventeen, her older sister Martine proudly noted in her diary that she was now running her own lace shop near the new stock exchange. Christophe Plantin also used his excellent contacts in Paris by other means. Wealthy residents from the Netherlands approached Plantin to find accommodation for their sons who were studying at the Sorbonne. Plantin then arranged a student room in the house of his close friend Pierre Porret. Through Plantin and Porret they could also transfer money to their sons who were studying in Paris. Plantin charged a commission for these services.

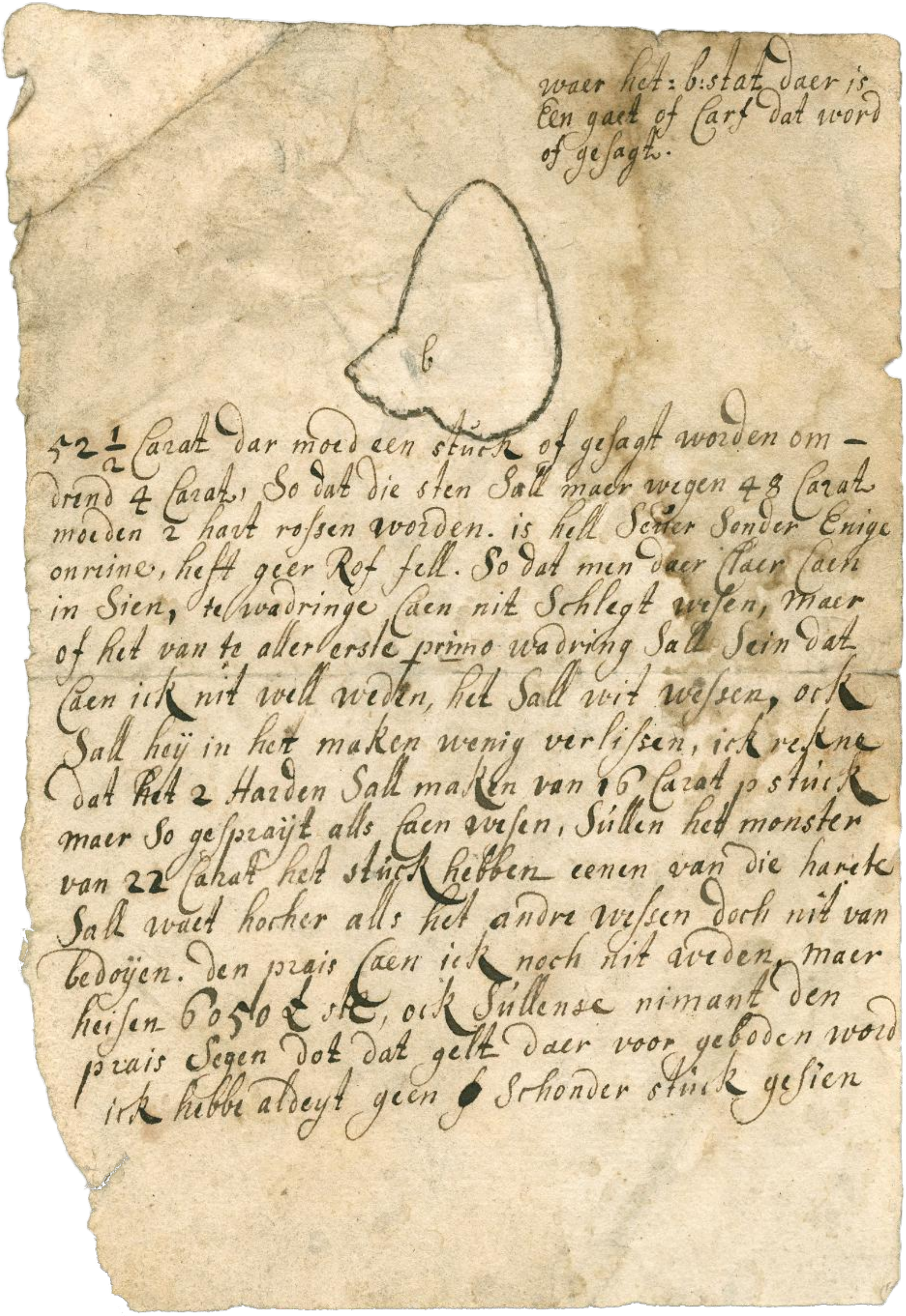
Many generations later, a descendant of Plantin became active in the lace trade again. Joannes Jacobus Moretus ordered lace from lace merchants in the Austrian Netherlands and then exported the lace to Spain. The company's archives contain parts of the records in which several samples of lace have been preserved. In 1737, for example, the Antwerp lace merchant Dominicus Vermanden produced a concordance list of lace terms. The document lists the Spanish terms for types of lace with their Dutch translations. Another appendix contained samples of laces attached with sealing wax for each type of lace in Vermanden's assortment.

Joannes Jacobus Moretus and his son Franciscus Joannes Moretus also invested heavily in several international trading companies. They corresponded extensively about these investments with agents in Amsterdam, London and Paris. This correspondence provides a unique insight into the emerging mercantile capitalism of the eighteenth century. Franciscus Joannes Moretus was also in direct contact with the Antwerp managers who ran the factories of the Company of Trieste and Fiume on the Adriatic coast. As major investors, the Moretus family sometimes received copies of important documents. Thus, the archives of the *Officina Plantiniana* contain a copy of the cargo list of the ships Den Arent and H. Elisabeth. These two ships loaded a cargo of porcelain at Canton -today's Guangzhou in China- in 1724 on behalf of the Ostend Company. In addition to the large "national" trading companies, the Moretuses also invested in smaller private companies. It is therefore not surprising that the archives contain a whole bundle of incoming letters from the company Fabritius & Wever. This company was based in Copenhagen and also had links with the Danish Asian Company. The firm corresponded with the Moretuses in Antwerp from 1747 to 1783. And, as mentioned above, François Moretus became a partner in De Gruijtters, Solvijns & Co in Ostend. As his mother, Maria Theresa Borrekens, had also invested in this trading company, he provided her with copies of various accounting documents.

In the Early Modern era, family and business were closely intertwined. It is not possible to draw a strict line between the business on the one hand and the family on the other hand. This overlap is certainly true of the business archives of the *Officina Plantiniana*. For this reason, the term Plantin-Moretus Archives is usually used to describe this conglomerate of business and family archives. The correspondence is the clearest illustration of the indivisibility of the archival conglomerate. The same series of incoming letters includes not only letters from booksellers and financial agents, but also the New Year's letters that the Moretus children sent to their parents at the end of the year. Nine-year-old Franciscus Joannes Moretus, in his own words, presented his parents with the first fruits of his penmanship on New Year's Eve 1726. The young Moretus had just learnt to write and wrote out the New Year's letter in giant letters. In addition, family members and business friends seamlessly combined business and family messages in the same letter. A good example is the intense correspondence with the Amsterdam paper merchant IJsbrand Vincent. In the same letter, Vincent could discuss the delivery of paper and the collection of bills of



The month of December 1718 in the almanac of Theresa Mathilde Schilders (MPM Arch. 1067).



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b

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van 22 Carat het stuck hebben eenen van die harick
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Note from John Merttins regarding the sawing of a 52.5-carat diamond, c. 1672 (MPM Archive SCH-HF-BA, no. 232).

exchange before moving on to young Balthasar Moretus IV's forthcoming journey to Paris and Rouen.

A rare example of the overlapping of family and business is the extraordinary New Year's gift offered by Jan Moretus I to Christophe Plantin in 1575. Moretus presented his father-in-law with an impressive sample book containing quires from 160 editions published by the *Officina Plantiniana* over the previous decade. An analysis of the contents quickly reveals that the sample book is much more than a hodgepodge of all kinds of editions. Of some editions, the quires bound in this sample book are the only known surviving copies in the world. Indeed, one of the earliest printed texts on Dutch grammar is such a unique specimen. Plantin published the first edition of *Cort onderwys van de acht deelen der Françoischer talen* (a brief teaching of the eight parts of the French language) in 1571. This French-Dutch schoolbook by Peeter Heyns explains the rules of French grammar in Dutch and is therefore indirectly a Dutch grammar too. Jan Moretus had the bulky folio, which is up to ten centimetres thick, bound in a recycled parchment sheet from a medieval antiphonary. He also added a handwritten dedication to his father-in-law.

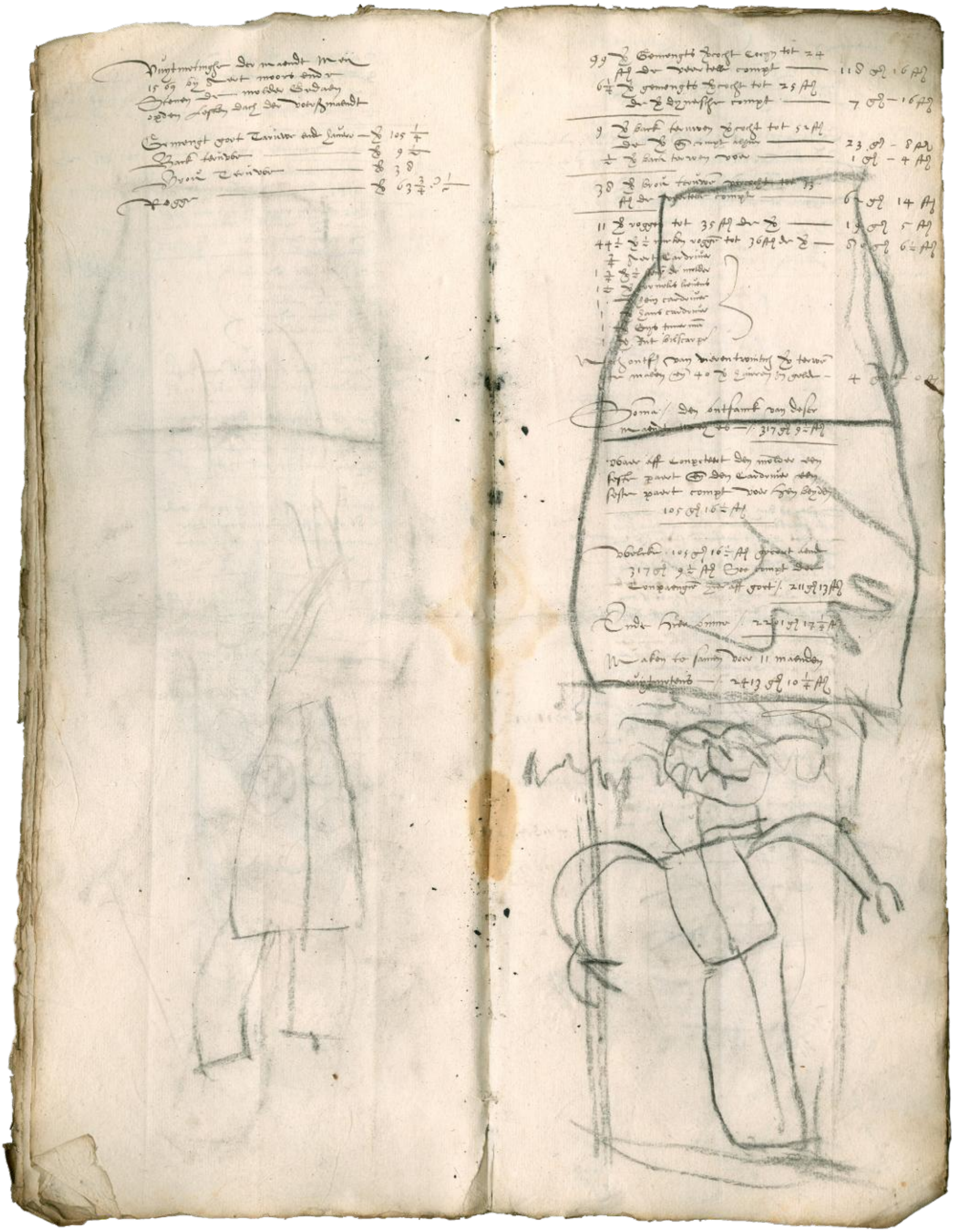
In the eighteenth century, the Moretuses discovered the convenience of almanacs. In the white space of the printed calendar books, they made all sorts of notes next to the days of the month. Among the male members of the Moretus family, these notes were mainly businesslike. But Theresa Mathilde Schilders –the wife of Joannes Jacobus Moretus– used the almanacs to record the events of her life. The personal notes she made in her almanacs from 1718 to 1723 turn these calendar books into real diaries. They provide a unique insight into the life of an aristocratic woman in eighteenth-century Antwerp. Of course, Theresa Mathilde recorded the births of her children. During the period in question, she gave birth to five children. After that she had four more children. She also recorded the births of relatives and acquaintances. So, we know that she was pregnant at the same time as her sister-in-law. Anna Maria Moretus (1687-1724), the sister of her husband Joannes Jacobus, gave birth to a daughter on 27 October 1719 at 11.30 pm. The next morning at 9.30 a.m., Theresa Mathilde gave birth to a son, Joannes Petrus. In addition to the births of her children, she also recorded the appointment of midwives and wet nurses, and even when she stopped breastfeeding. In 1718, her husband was appointed almoner. Theresa Mathilde actively assisted her husband in caring for the poor and looked after newly born foundlings. She had the privilege of naming them. She sometimes took her inspiration from the place where they were found. Augustinus Inganck, for example, was found at the entrance to St Augustine's Church. Not all the names were equally thoughtful. She probably saddled Bertinus Geenderweerden, for instance, with an inferiority complex ("worthless Bert").

As the wealth of the Moretus family grew, so did the size of their household. Anna Maria de Neuf kept household diaries from her marriage to Balthasar Moretus III in 1673 until her death in 1714. In these journals she recorded all household expenses in chronological order, from the purchase of food and drink to the maintenance of the city palace on the Vrijdagmarkt. The household diaries are a valuable source for research into the material culture of a wealthy household around 1700. We learn that Anna Maria made chocolate for herself and her grandchildren. In 1712, she bought all the ingredients to make 50 pounds of chocolate from her regular grocer. And even for a sick child, a mother has expenses. When nine-year-old Petrus "Peroken" Moretus (1685-1734) contracted "petiesen" –chicken pox or measles– in January 1695, Anna Maria de Neuf travelled by carriage with a nurse-nun from Antwerp to the boarding school in Lier. Anna Maria spent the night in an inn and returned the next day with her sick son. She meticulously recorded all expenses in her household diary.

In addition, the Moretus family also kept accounts of merchandise and services related to the household. The separate accounts were bound thematically in seventeen modern volumes. The earliest accounts date from the late sixteenth century, and the most recent accounts were received by the Moretus family in the early nineteenth century. The purchase of food and drink is of course recorded, but also the purchase of clothes, the children's education and doctors' bills. Antwerp dancing master Joannes Baptista van Dooren, for example, charged for dancing lessons he gave to Anna Maria (10), Melchior (13) and Maria Isabella (18) in 1673-1674. And the surgeon François Dillens sent Maria Theresa Borrekens the bill for shaving two of her sons in 1782. Louis (24) was shaved three times a week and Jacques (25) only twice. So, neither of these twenty-somethings walked around clean-shaven every day. Louis seemed to have a thicker beard than his older brother.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the male members of the Moretus family married women from the upper echelons of Antwerp society. The union of two wealthy families increased the wealth of the Moretus family considerably. Sometimes the other family died out after a few generations. At that point, the Moretuses not only inherited the fortune of their relatives, but also the business and family archives of the extinct family. The Moretus family incorporated these archives into their own, and so the Plantin-Moretus archives grew into a conglomeration of business and family archives. The conglomeration includes the archives of the De Neuf and De Vlieghere families, but the most extensive archive is that of the Schilders family. Theresa Mathilde Schilders married Joannes Jacobus Moretus in 1716. When her only brother Paulus Franciscus Schilders (1699-1774) died childless, her grandchildren inherited the assets and the Schilders family archives. The archives reflect the activities of five generations of the Schilders, from Adriaan I Schilders (†1630), who was responsible for supplying the Spanish garrisons in Antwerp, to the eighteenth-century landowner Paulus Franciscus Schilders. Henri François Schilders (ca. 1640-1680) is by far the largest part of the archive. After a three-year apprenticeship with the Italian merchant Francesco Feroni in Amsterdam, Henri François set up his own business in Antwerp around 1660. He built up a wholesale business in luxury goods on a European scale. Henri François traded in diamonds, silver, lace, printed textiles and silk, as well as consumer goods such as sugar and tobacco. He had an extensive trading network with numerous contacts in Western Europe and Italy, which reached as far as Lima (Peru). In addition, Henri François was also active in financial trading on the stock exchanges of Amsterdam, London, Madrid and Paris. Finally, he was a broker of maritime insurance for ships and cargoes against shipwreck and piracy. Henri François Schilders maintained an enormous amount of commercial correspondence in the pursuit of this wide range of commercial activities. The business archives contain 177 boxes of incoming letters from correspondents all over Europe. In one of these letters, the London diamond dealer John Merttins pointed out that in the seventeenth century Antwerp did not yet have the reputation as a diamond city that it has today. According to him, Antwerp diamonds were so poorly cut that it was difficult to sell them in London. Nevertheless, Henri François Schilders traded diamonds with a total weight of 8,848 carats between 1667 and 1671 alone. He had a turnover of 115,000 Carolus guilders in the diamond trade during these years, earning a commission of between 2.5 and 4.5% as a broker.

The business archives of the *Officina Plantiniana* have miraculously survived the passage of time. Since its foundation in the middle of the sixteenth century, nine successive generations have shaped the archive. In these three centuries, the Moretus family have rarely wasted paper. The placement lists that the Moretus family occasionally made of their archives show that they took care of their paper heritage. Maintaining the continuity of the archives was not always easy. Exceptionally, they made small slips, such as when a Moretus gave a diary of the sixteenth century grain merchant Anna Janssens (†1581) to one of the children as a sweetener. "Go ahead. You can make some drawings in here, dear little children", this Moretus probably must have said. The result is remarkable. The obedient children filled the journal with drawings. But as a rule, the Moretuses passed on their publishing industry almost intact from generation to generation. That is why today we have this unique archives source, which has so much to tell us about business and life in Antwerp in the earlier days.



Child's drawing in a sixteenth-century journal of Anna Janssens (MPM Archives Janssens, AR-VAR 1, no. 2).

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N

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The Dutch East India Company Archive

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Register on March 4, 2004

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Memory of the World


Guinea
Gout kust
Benin
Moramba
Gabon
Loango

The Dutch East India Company (VOC)

As the 'world's first multinational', the Dutch East India Company (VOC) was long synonymous with commercial spirit, technical and financial innovation, determination and fabulous profits. In size and scope, it exceeded the British East India Company. The transport of spices from the East to Europe and the money it raised captured the imagination of many, even into the first decade of the 21st century.

The Company territory stretched from the Cape of Good Hope to the West of the Magellan Strait.

European-Asian trade captured the imagination, but it was inter-Asian trade from which the VOC, especially in the 17th century, also derived a lot of income. The VOC de facto became a state within the state, forced by the impossibility of control from Amsterdam. It was allowed to conclude treaties with states within the patent territory, build forts, maintain armies and fleets and wage war. Between 1602 and 1796, she sent nearly a million Europeans to Asia on 4721 ships.

Meanwhile, it is increasingly becoming clear that this picture needs to be adjusted. The VOC's monopoly position had little to do with free trade. Innovation consisted not only of navigation and cartography, but also of finding markets, including enslaved people markets, and responding seamlessly to trade demand in the region.

In practice, the decisiveness with which the VOC guarded that monopoly often meant violence and countless deaths. The fabulous profits in money, should be weighed on the balance sheet against the human suffering the VOC caused.

Why did the Dutch, and the other Europeans who signed on with the VOC, take so much risk for the profit of merchants and investors? Was the spice trade so profitable when you consider the number of sailors who did not make it to the end of the voyage? Not from a human perspective now, but for the society of the time, it was. That makes the VOC archives complex with many facets.

Memory of the World

With a total of 4,500 linear metres, this archive is also one of the largest, most extraordinary and most consulted collections within the National Archives. In addition to the 1,200 metres in The Hague, the collection is scattered around the world, yet unified: in Jakarta (2,500 m), Cape Town (450 m), Colombo (310 m) and Chennai (64 m).

The 25 million pages shed light on the economic history of dozens of countries in Asia and southern Africa and the Netherlands in the 17th and 18th centuries. They are also an invaluable source for the political, administrative and military historiography of the Asian countries that were in the VOC patent territory. In fact, for some societies in Asia, they are the only source.

That is why this complete VOC archive was included in the Memory of the World register by UNESCO in 2004. Nowhere else in the world is there a comparable treasure of information about Asia in the 17th and 18th centuries. I invite you to view and study this archive from all the perspectives it holds, hidden or otherwise.

Tom De Smet
Director Archives, Services and Innovation
National Archives The Hague

The Dutch East India Company and its Archive

Ron Guleij
Collection Specialist Cartography
National Archives of the Netherlands

History of the Dutch East India Company (VOC)

Introduction

The Dutch East India Company (in Dutch: Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, abbreviated as VOC) remains a well-known concept in the Netherlands. The company, also known as "the first multinational in the world", enjoyed a number of privileges that basically gave it a monopoly on Dutch trade within its "chartered territory". This area reached from the Cape of Good Hope to the west coast of America and, apart from the east coast of Africa, included all of Asia and Oceania. The VOC also granted the privilege of concluding treaties with states lying within its trading area, constructing fortresses and maintaining armies and naval fleets. And if thought necessary, waging war.

So, while the VOC continues to captivate the imagination, it also regularly makes tempers run high. The flipside of the success story contains abhorrent tales of violence, atrocities and repression.

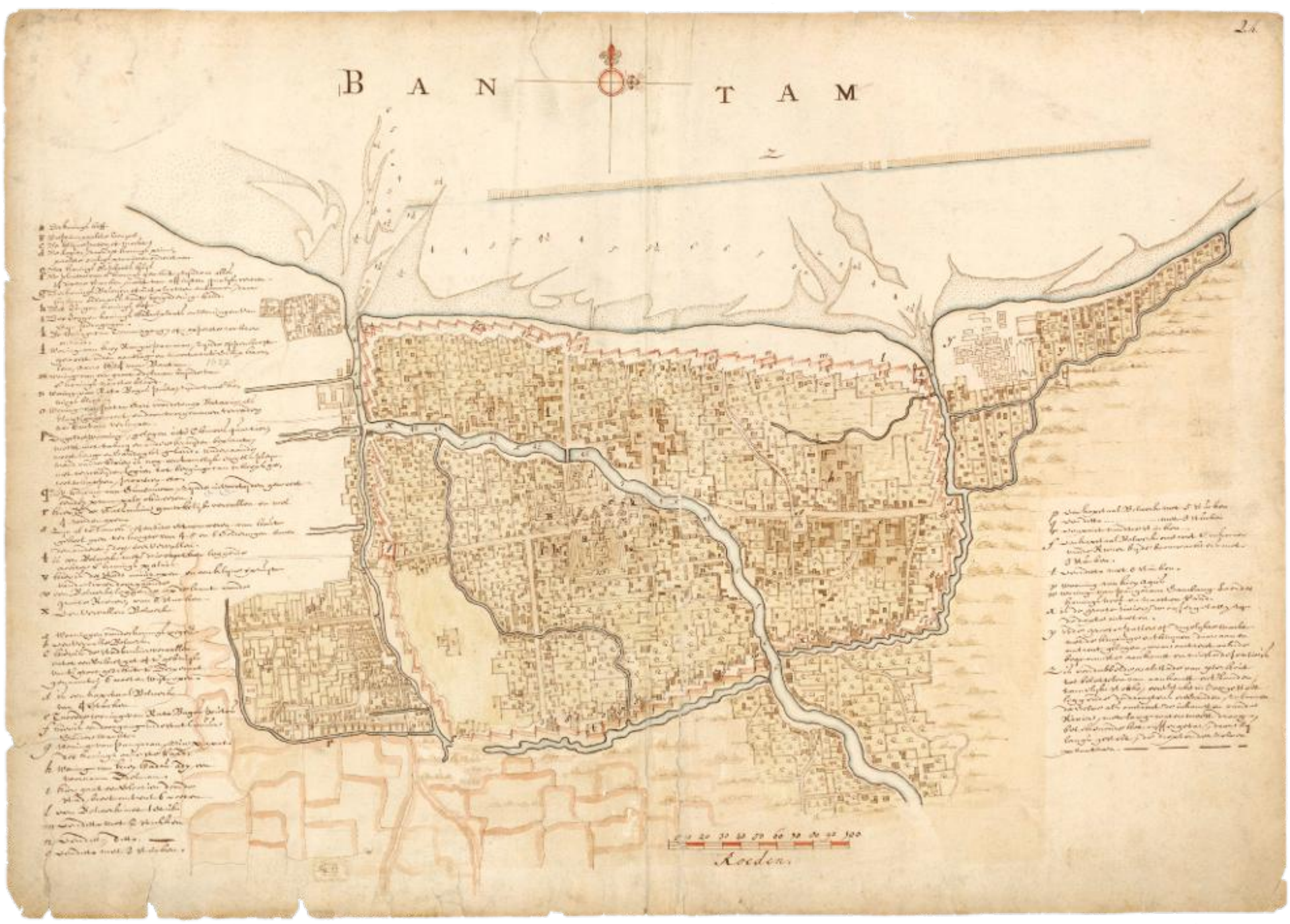
The influence and power of the VOC in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were unprecedented. Between 1602 and 1796 the company sent almost a million Europeans to Asia on 4,721 ships. During the period from 1500 to 1795 all other companies in Europe together transported 882,412 people. In comparison: the biggest competitor of the VOC, the British East India Company had a total of 2690 ships.

The prelude to the founding of the VOC

Lisbon in Portugal played a significant role in the international mercantile shipping of the Republic. This came about because Lisbon had the best supply route and port for Asian commodities such as pepper and other costly spices. The union of the Portuguese crown with that of Spain threatened from time to time to place a general ban on Dutch ships visiting ports on the Iberian Peninsula. However, it never came to a full prohibition. It became more serious when in 1591 the supply of pepper virtually fell completely into the hands of a small syndicate of European merchants. The supply in Lisbon stopped in 1592, which drove up the price of pepper and other spices. This price rise combined with investment and know how –partly supplied by people from the southern Dutch area fleeing Philip II's troops– was the driving force behind the Republic's decision to set sail to Asia.

Shipping from the Netherlands to Asia or to India –as it was called in those days– started up in the latter years of the sixteenth century. The Netherlands was then known as the Republic of the United Netherlands. The Republic, consisting of Gelderland, Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Friesland, Overijssel and Groningen, still was a young state in the years between 1579 till 1581 emerging from a rebellion against the common ruler of the country, the Spanish Philip II. At that time he was the most powerful monarch on earth, not only because of his many possessions in Europe but also because of Spain's colonies in the New World. The union of the monarchies of Spain and Portugal in 1580 added further colonies in Asia.

Philip II attempted to regain the territories lost in the Low Countries. The Republic therefore lost much territory in the early years, but around 1588 it appeared as though the Republic would survive. In spite of the war with Spain, the Republic prospered economically; especially the province of Holland and within it the city of Amsterdam. Holland's strong position was due to its dominance trade and shipping to Northern Europe and the Baltic Sea. This powerful position in turn strengthened trade with England, France, Portugal and Spain.



Map of Bantam. Isaak de Graaf, 1695 (from a 1630 original). Collection of Foreign Maps Leupe, 4.VEL, inv. no. 1175. The town of Bantam in Java is an important place for trade between the Indian islands. It was even the most important market for pepper. Many Dutch ships on their voyages to Asia docked here. In the 1600s, Bantam was the most important port in Java. It was the first port in the Indian archipelago visited by the Dutch. The king of Bantam did not hold absolute power; he had to take into consideration both his regent and the local harbour master. Bantam was a rich town with an important market, frequented by traders from India, Persia and China. It would lose its leading position when, after a few years, Batavia became the VOC's economic centre in Asia. Dutch ships visited Bantam for the first time in 1596.

The founding of the Dutch East India Company, 20 March 1602. Archive of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), 1.04.02, inv. no. 1. The VOC charter is an important document and a masterpiece of the Dutch National Archives collection. It gives the VOC exclusive rights to trade in Asia. The Early Companies – Dutch companies already trading with the East Indies before 1602 – were merged into the VOC on 20 March 1602.

The Early Companies

Pepper, cloves, cinnamon and nutmeg: in the sixteenth century, the Portuguese more or less held a monopoly on the trade in these spices from the East Indies. This changed with the Eighty Years' War. The Spanish and Portuguese ports were closed to ships from the Northern Netherlands. The merchants of Holland and Zeeland were not about to accept this and decided to sail to the East themselves.

Under the command of Cornelis de Houtman, the "First Ship Voyage to the East Indies" sailed around the southern tip of Africa to the East Indies, arriving in Bantam in 1596. A year later, the fleet returned home. This proved that the Dutch were capable of sailing to the East Indies without the help of Portuguese merchants! From that moment, the race was on, and by 1601, fifteen Dutch fleets had sailed to the Spice Islands.

In the late sixteenth century, the Early Companies, the forerunners of the United East India Company, came into being. They equipped ships capable of undertaking sea voyages to Asia. It was characteristic of the Early Companies that these were one-off enterprises. Wealthy merchants and other stakeholders pooled their money and hired or purchased ships for a single expedition. They loaded the ships with weapons, provisions, merchandise and/or cash and mustered a crew. This involved considerable sums of money, as the outward and homeward voyage took about two years. On return to the Republic the accounts were balanced, the ship was sold and staff was dismissed. If any profit was made, a new expedition could be planned. Then the whole cycle started again from the beginning.

Over the period from 1595 to 1602 sixty-five ships were sent from Holland and Zeeland to Asia by eight or nine Early Companies.

The Early Companies were competitors. The politician Johan van Oldenbarnevelt considered this harmful for the Republic's treasury. Especially in a time when all resources were needed for the war against the Spaniards. And there were more competitors: the English founded the East India Company in 1600. Van Oldenbarnevelt therefore used his influence to persuade the Dutch merchants to cooperate more closely. After difficult negotiations, they finally succeeded. On 24 January 1602, the governors of the "Early Companies" signed an agreement to create a joint Company: the Dutch East India Company.

The VOC

The VOC, which has been called "the world's first multinational company", was founded in March 1602. The States General of the Republic granted the new company a number of privileges in the so-called charter. Firstly, it was the right to be the only company operating from the Netherlands within an area defined in the charter. This "chartered trading area" extended from the Cape of Good Hope to the west coast of America, and thus covered all of Asia, as well as the east coast of Africa and all of Oceania.

In addition, the new company was given responsibility for both war and diplomacy. This gave the VOC the privilege of concluding treaties with states lying within its trading charter, constructing fortresses and maintaining armies and naval fleets and if thought necessary, waging war. Waging war against enemies of the Republic (in the early days mainly Spain and Portugal) within the chartered territory also became the responsibility of the VOC. The company would exist for almost two hundred years, from its foundation in 1602 until 1800, when the charter was no longer renewed.

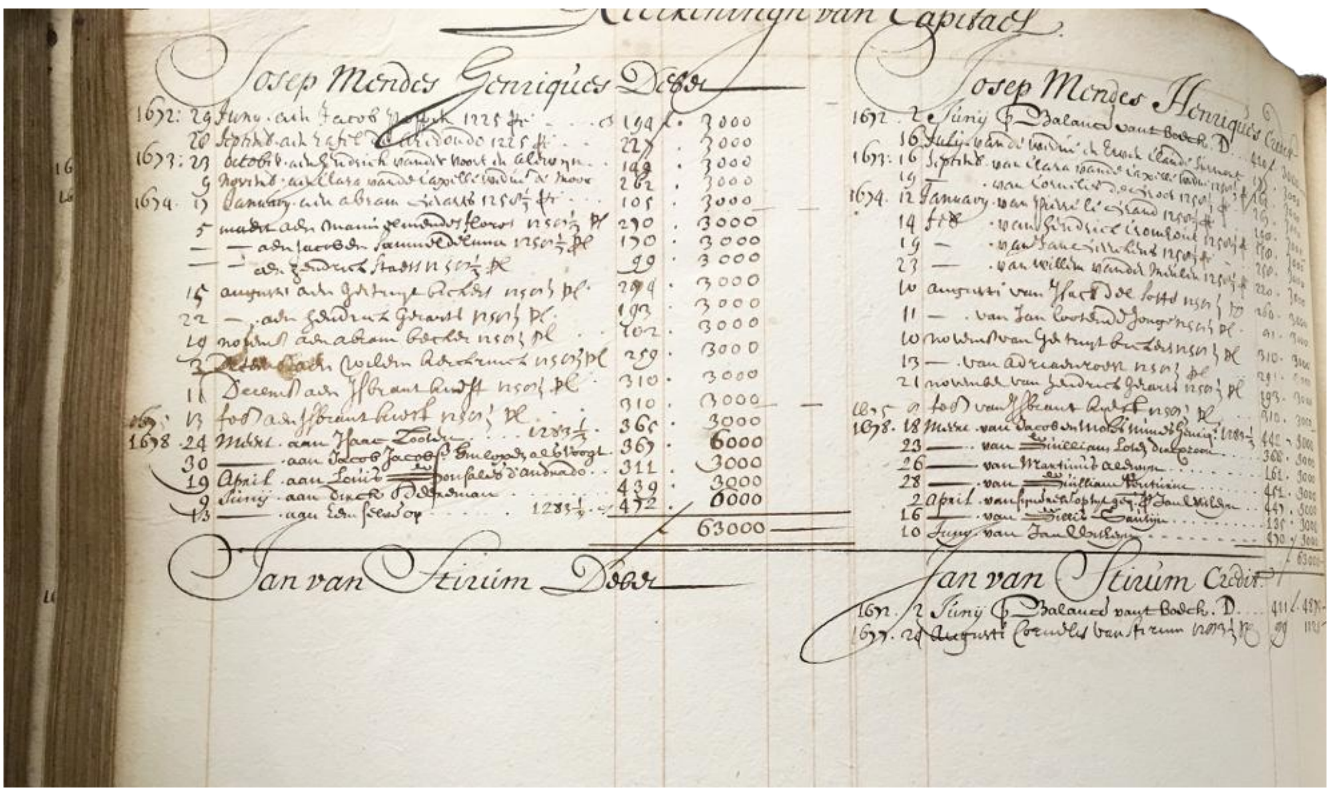
The charter of the VOC (what we might now call a concession) was extended several times in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In 1795, when it lost many ships, trading posts and overseas territories to England, the VOC was placed under state receivership by the Batavian Republic founded in that same year. The last charter expired in 1799, and the VOC's assets fell into the hands of the state, effectively becoming nationalised.

Amsterdam's capital for the VOC. August 1602. Archive of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), 1.04.02, inv. no. 7064. This register lists the names of all those who invested money in the VOC's Amsterdam Chamber in 1602. Of these, Isaac le Maire is the largest stakeholder with 85,000 guilders. But Dignum Jans, a servant of the VOC's Amsterdam accountant Barent Lampe, was also involved. She contributed the sum of 50 guilders.

The organisation of the VOC

The organisation of the VOC with its six chambers within the Republic was decentralised. The division between of activities such as shipbuilding and provisioning or the purchase and sale of goods was painstakingly defined. Amsterdam held half, Zeeland a quarter and the other chambers one-sixteenth each. Each chamber was run by directors, a fixed number of people per chamber. These were appointed by the municipal authorities, or in the case of Zeeland by the provincial council. And candidates were nominated by the directors then in office. Most of the time these were the wealthier stakeholders. Each chamber sent delegations two or three times a year to the joint meetings in Amsterdam or Middelburg. These meetings, held to determine central policies, were known as the Gentlemen Seventeen after the number of directors attending. There were eight delegates from Amsterdam, four from Zeeland and one each from the smaller chambers. The seventeenth seat was taken alternately by Zeeland or by one of the smaller chambers. Amsterdam therefore never formally had the decisive vote, something the Zeelanders as the second seafaring province had always been wary of.

Each chamber had its own shipyard where the large return ships were built. Especially in the eighteenth century, the company was one of the largest employers in the smaller towns such as Enkhuizen and Hoorn. At some point in the eighteenth century, around 3,000 men worked in the offices, shipyards and warehouses of the company. Over a period of almost two hundred years, the VOC built more than 1,450 ships in its shipyards in the Netherlands. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, almost a million men would sail on these ships to Asia, yet only 360,000 of them would return. These men came from all over Europe, with Germany and Scandinavia in particular supplying many soldiers and sailors. Wages were low there, which made the VOC salary, which was low by Dutch standards, attractive to them. Most of the high-ranking personnel came from the Dutch Republic.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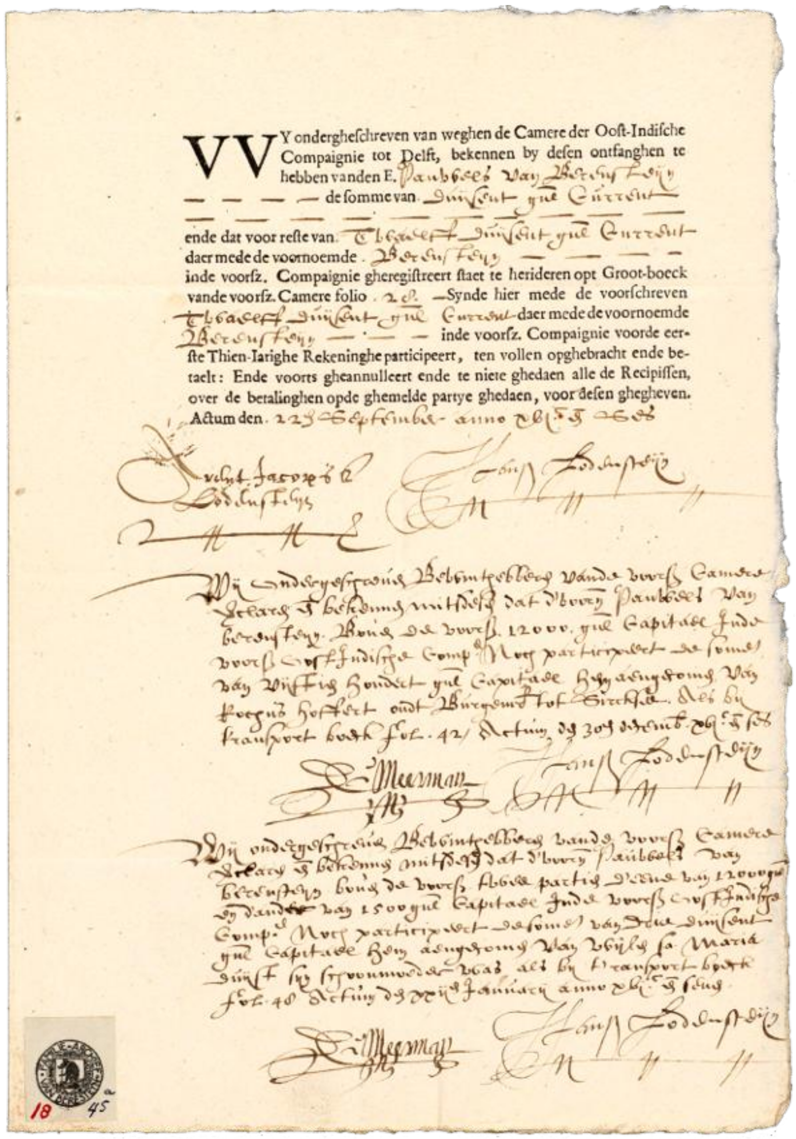
Ledger of dividends on shares in the Amsterdam Chamber, 1672-1674. Archive of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), 1.04.02, inv. no. 7071. This ledger lists, for each year, who received a dividend in spices or money. Anyone who owned a share in the VOC was entitled to such a payment. The VOC archives contain an enormous number of such ledgers, as well as journals, cash books and balance sheets; together they provide a wealth of information about the VOC's financial administration.

A share in the VOC and the Amsterdam Stock Exchange

Ship voyages cost a lot of money. For that reason the VOC gave everyone the opportunity to invest in the company. These stakeholders bought a share in the VOC and the lively trade in these shares soon led to the establishment of a stock exchange in Amsterdam in 1611.

Not only was the VOC the biggest trading company in the world with a fleet of more than a hundred ships, thousands of employees, six Dutch offices or chambers in the Netherlands and almost thirty branches in Asia, but it was also the first business to be listed on the stock market. The company had discovered the concept of permanent share capital or joint stock and was therefore the founder of the Amsterdam stock exchange.

The foundation of trading shares was laid in Amsterdam, from there it spread across the entire globe. Private individuals were now able to participate on a wider scale in company ownership. They were encouraged to buy shares when the VOC was created in 1602. In fact, share dealing was already taking place on the stock exchange even before the first ship had departed for Asia! This revolution in commercial financing gave the VOC an enormous advantage on its competitors. All shareholders made a contribution to the company.



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Share in the VOC chamber of Delft held by Pauwels van Berensteijn, 22 September 1606. This is the second oldest VOC share. It is actually a proof of payment for an investment in the VOC. However, these documents were soon traded as if they were shares. Van Berensteyn family archive, 2.21.018, inv. no. 3.

Map of Amsterdam/Claes Jansz. Visscher, 1643. Collection of Acquisitions Maps and Drawings since 1888, 4.AKF2, inv. no. 16A1.. This printed map is very special; only two copies have survived, and this is the only one that is coloured. The East India House is depicted at the bottom left. The VOC administration gathered in this house on the Oude Hoogstraat in Amsterdam. Other towns with a VOC chamber also had such an office. At the top right is an image of the Amsterdam Stock Exchange.

Operating results

The VOC's profits were very disappointing in the first years following its foundation. The costs of putting the early squadrons to sea were exceedingly high, particularly because they were also required to attack the Portuguese in Asia. For a time, the income fell below the investment. It was not until 1610 that the first dividend was paid out to the investors, mostly in kind, namely in quantities of mace and pepper. The directors wanted to turn the VOC into a strong and permanent business enterprise. Income that would normally have been paid out was instead used for reinvestment. The shareholders were not at all pleased with this situation. They wanted to be paid in cash. However, their protests were ineffective. The shareholders did not have any statutory powers at their disposal, and the directors had the support of the States-General.

The first heavily armed fleet entirely equipped by the VOC sailed out in 1603. It was immediately successful, at least in militarily strategic terms. The VOC captured the Portuguese positions on Ambon in the east of modern-day Indonesia in 1605. This was a first step towards

View of Banda Neira. Studio of Johannes Vingboons, circa 1665. 4.VELH inv. no. 619.114, Collection of Foreign Maps Leupe, Supplement. In the early 17th century, Banda was of great economic importance to the VOC, because this island was the only place int the world where nutmeg and mace were produced at that time. In the picture we see the village of Nera with fort Nassau and nutmeg trees to the right.

achieving a global monopoly in the supply of cloves. And also, by taking Ambon it was the first time that the VOC acquired territorym which implicitly meant that it had authority over the Asian population. Therefore, Ambon in 1605 was therefore the beginning of the Netherlands' becoming a colonial power.

From an organisational point of view the first years in Ambon did not go smoothly. The admirals of the dispatched fleets also served as the highest authorities, but when they returned home their leadership also ended. The admiral of the next fleet, if available, then became the highest ranking official. This was not conducive to the continuity of colonial rule. The VOC now wanted a central authority in a designated place in Asia. The central authority fell upon a governor-general in 1609. However, he was not an absolute ruler but was assisted by a Council of East Indies. Pieter Both was the first governor-general of 'Dutch East Indies'. A permanent centre was founded ten years later when, in 1619, when Jan Pietersz Coen conquered the city of Jakatra, now Jakarta. The new capital was named Batavia.

Commercial fleet

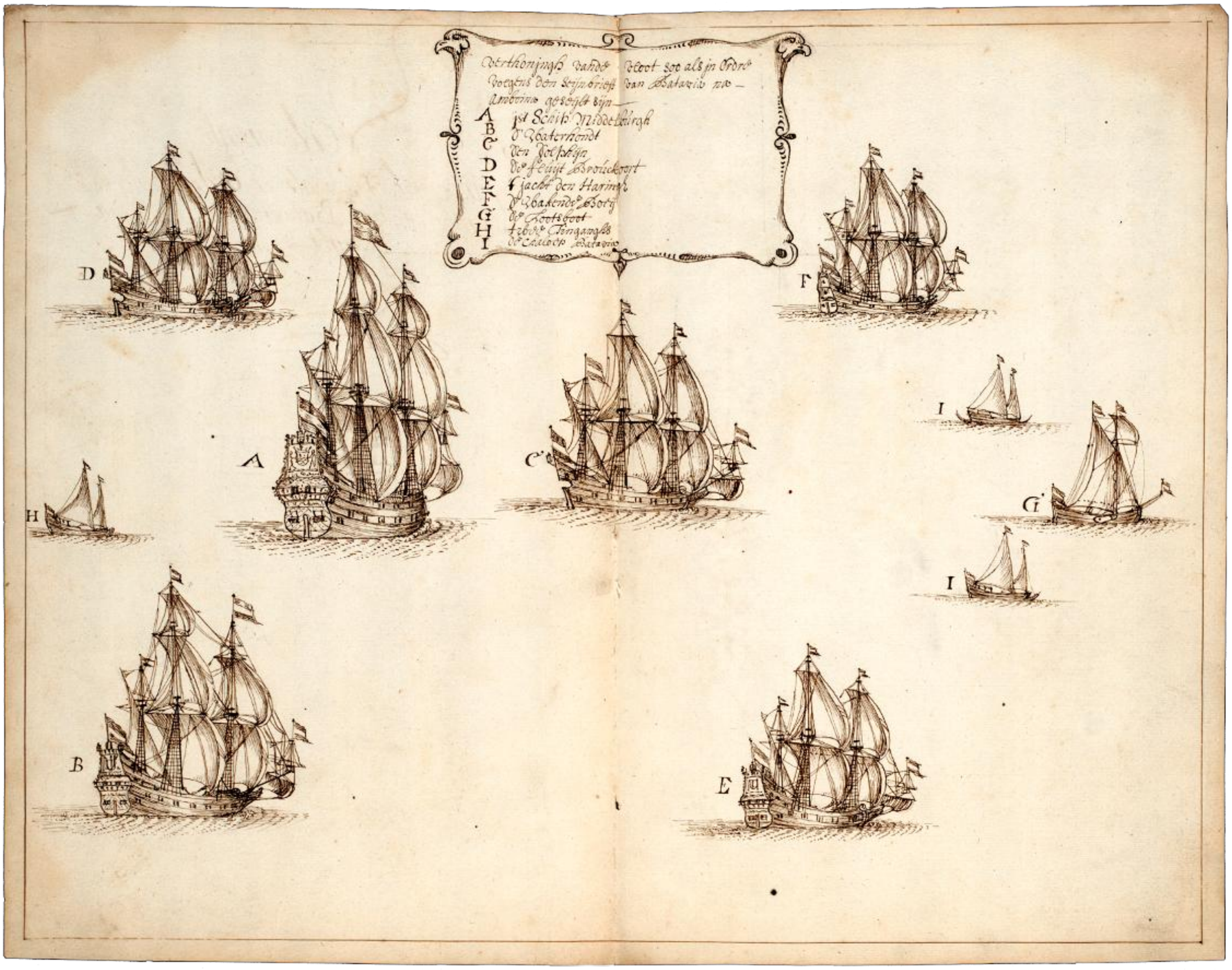
In the nearly two centuries that the VOC existed, contact between the enterprise in Holland and Zeeland and the overseas empire was maintained by a vast fleet of ships owned by the company. The shipyards built around 1,500 ships. Up to 1795, a ship had been dispatched 4,721 times to Asia and had begun the homeward voyage 3,356 times.

The outward-bound journey, which took almost three quarters of a year, was foremost a matter of provisioning the overseas operations with manpower, precious metals, money and equipment. The homeward voyage had a more mercantile character with well-stowed holds full of Asian merchandise. The crew on a homeward bound voyage was much smaller than on the outward journey, because the death toll during the stay in the tropics was very high.

Within Asia, the VOC played a very active part in commerce, making Batavia the centre of an inter-Asian trading network. This trade was continued in the eighteenth century with a fleet of less than fifty, mostly elderly ships that had been built in the Republic. In addition, the VOC possessed more than a hundred smaller crafts, built in Asia, patrolling the strategic routes for protection. The overseas workforce was much larger than the one back home. It had increased from a few thousand at the start of the seventeenth century to more than 20,000 by the middle of the eighteenth century. More than half were military personnel and one sixth of them were seamen. The number of merchants and clerks was small compared to the military and naval staff. Nevertheless, this was the group of people that supplied the men who would hold power in governance, finance and law.

Outward-bound and return voyage of the VOC. Internet image.
Estimate of the number of ships built in each of the six VOC towns during the period from 1602 to 1795 inclusive.

Chamber	Built ships
Amsterdam	728
Zeeland	306
Enkhuizen	108
Delft	111
Hoorn	102
Rotterdam	110
Total	1,465



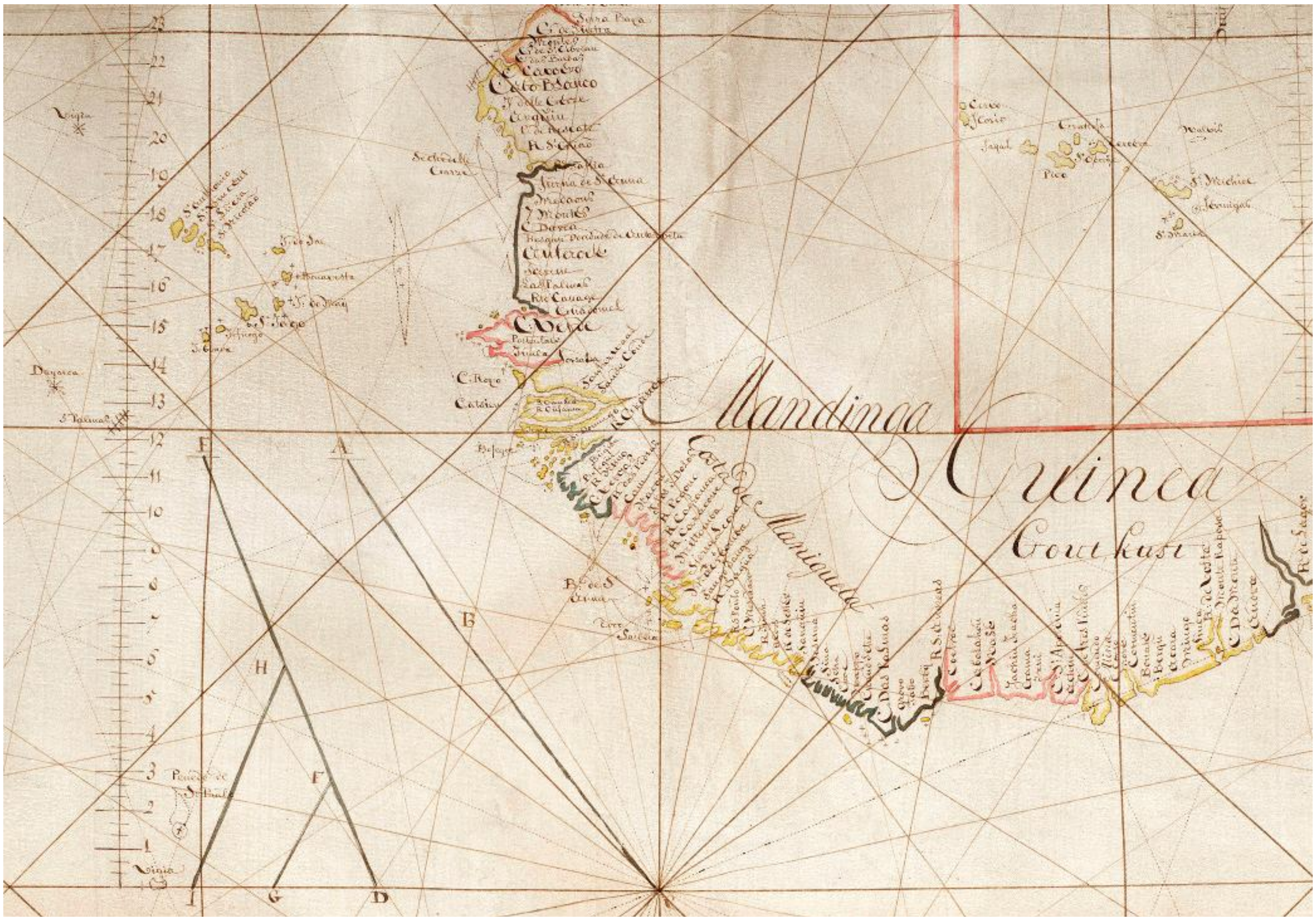
A fleet of VOC ships, 1647. Archive of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), 1.04.02, inv. no. 1159. Drawing of an outgoing fleet of VOC ships, included in Letters and Papers from the East Indies to the Gentlemen Seventeen and the Chamber of Amsterdam, 1647. A transom return ship, so called because of the flat “mirror” at the stern, could carry a lot of cargo. It is therefore the most commonly used ship for the voyage from Amsterdam to Batavia and back. In addition to this type of ship, the VOC also used smaller ships such as the *fluyt* [literally flute] and the frigate. Below the letter D. is the fluyt-type ship Broekoord, with its distinctive convex hull and rounded stern. The ship was used by the VOC from 1636 to 1648.

The cartographic production of the VOC

At the closing of the sixteenth century the Republic had gained knowledge from Portuguese sources of the passage to India. This knowledge was disseminated in Dutch publications such as the *Itinerario* by Jan Huygen van Linschoten. In addition, the Dutch cartographer Petrus Plancius made versions of the maritime charts drawn by the Portuguese Bartolomeo de Lasso.

Good maps and charts were an indispensable aid to the VOC in running a business in the far-away chartered trading areas. These were initially nautical charts to guide ships safely to in the East Indies. But the VOC did not only produce charts for navigational purposes. Later on they made maps of *terra firma*, plans and city maps as well as building construction drawings. As the VOC increasingly moved towards the construction of fortresses and settlements to protect its properties and trade, maps and plans were required for this purpose. Thus, the output of the maps and charts ran parallel with the expansion of VOC activities.

Via the safe “wagon track” around the Equator, Abraham Anias, 1748-1750. Collection of Foreign Maps Leupe, 4.VEL, inv. no. 100. To get safely past the Equator, the “wagon track” in the Atlantic was the mandatory route for VOC ships to the Cape of Good Hope. This course was carefully plotted to ensure that ships did not drift into windless areas. This map is undated and anonymous, but the characteristic handwriting and the drawn compass rose suggest that it was designed by the Zeeland cartographer Abraham Anias.



Wagon track, Abraham Anias, 1748-1750. Collection of foreign maps Leupe, 4.VEL, inv. no. 100 Detail. On their voyage to Batavia, VOC ships were completely dependent on the winds and currents. On the outward voyage, the ships had to try to follow the so-called wagon or cart track. The wagon track was the optimal route (corridor) prescribed by the VOC. Around the Equator, every ship had to cope with the absence of wind, but within the wagon track they were least affected by currents. If they did not follow the prescribed route, the ships had to deal with currents that took them east to the Guinea bend (Ghana) and west to Brazil. From there it was difficult to reach the Cape with the south-easterly wind. In that case, the skipper had to head west towards Brazil. If they missed the wagon track on the other side, they could drift off the coast of Brazil. If all went well, four months after leaving, they could refresh themselves at the Cape of Good Hope and then sail further east.

Relatively few ships were lost during the approximately 8000 ship's voyages commissioned by the VOC. The experience of the navigators deserves much of credit, but this was due to the high quality of the nautical charts and the excellent skills of the VOC's cartographic division.

In the early days of the VOC, the commissioner was responsible for purchasing or producing sea charts. Very few of the early nautical charts used in the first years on VOC vessels have survived. In 1617 the Gentlemen Seventeen appointed Hessel Gerritsz as the exclusive chart- and mapmaker for the Amsterdam chamber. In practice the Amsterdam chamber supplied charts to the other five chambers.

Charts had to be continually updated and revised. Charts with obsolete or incorrect information had to be destroyed. It is estimated that in the period between 1602 and 1753 at least 70,000 nautical charts were drawn on parchment. Skippers and mates were obliged to follow the company's sailing instructions and use the charts provided. They also had to keep a log of all unknown coasts and reefs and transfer this knowledge to the cartographers on arrival in either Batavia or the Republic.

In order to make the passage to Batavia within six to eight months, a captain would use approximately thirty charts. Every VOC ship was provided with four sets of charts, one for each of the four officers responsible for navigation: the skipper, the master and the first and second mate. On average a chart would survive six voyages: three outbound voyages and three homebound voyages.

For the route from Texel to the Cape of Good Hope and from the Cape to Java, the ship was provided with overview charts drawn in a smaller scale for sailing on the open ocean; these were the so-called '*overzeilers*' (literally meaning 'sailing over') and were drawn on parchment. In addition, larger scale or detailed charts were also taken on board. These were intended for navigating harbours and estuaries and for navigation between the Indonesian archipelago. Around 350 copies of such '*overzeilers*' have survived worldwide, no more than 100 of them held in the National Archives of the Netherlands.

Life on board the ships

The *spiegelretourschip* was the most frequently used type of ship for the round voyage from Amsterdam to Batavia and back. The name of this type of East Indiaman is derived from the flat transom – the '*spiegel*' (literally mirror in Dutch) on the stern of the ship. These ships were capable of carrying vast quantities of cargo. To ensure that the precious goods arrived unscathed and intact, the ship's load had to be stowed efficiently and safely in the hold. This job had to be carried out accurately and relied on the so-called stowage cargo lists.

The care for the cargo was in stark contrast to that of the ordinary seaman. Sailing for the VOC was not an attractive proposition. The crews often recruited by impressment were mainly drawn from the lowest ranks of society or had grown up in orphanages. The VOC operated a five year employment contract.

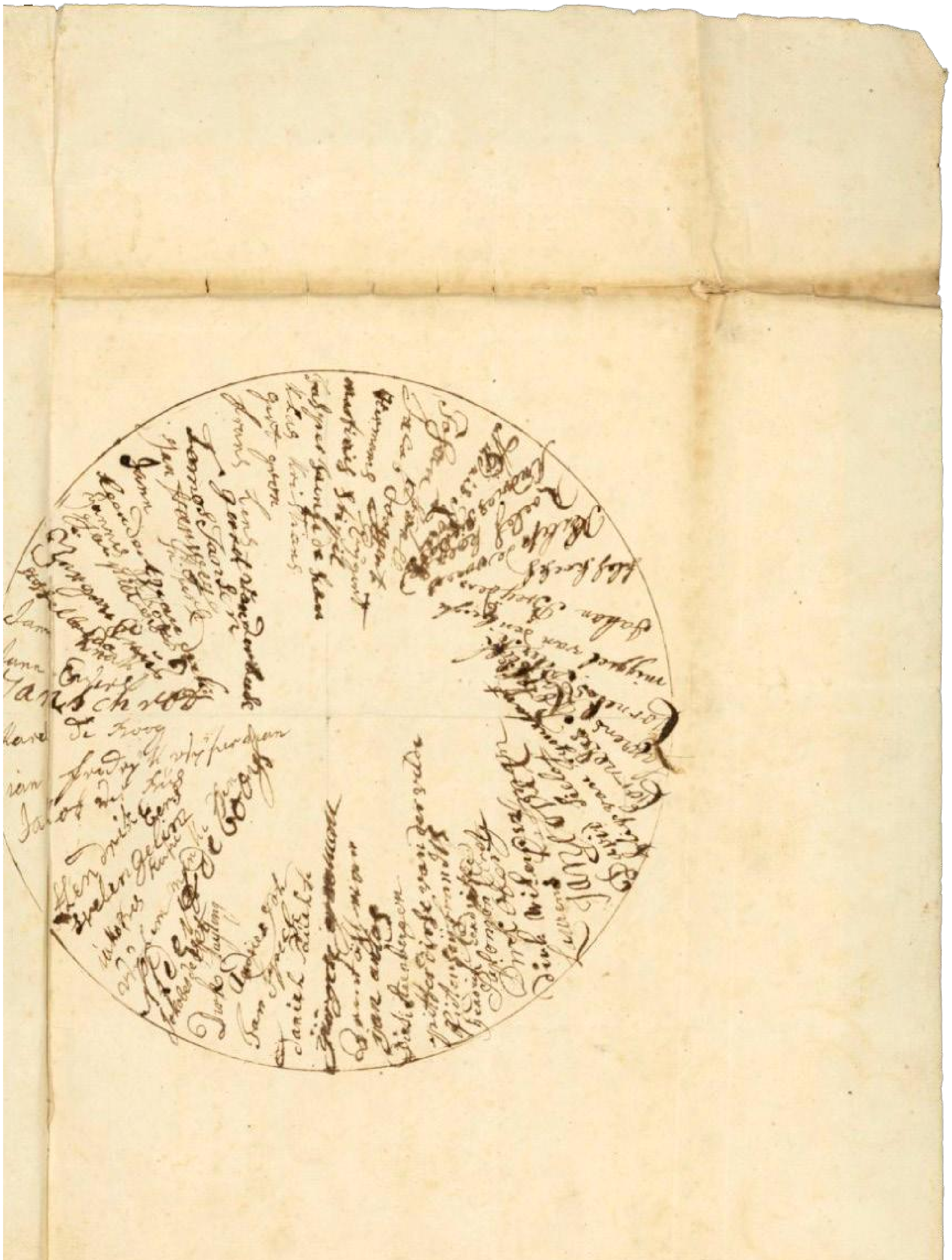
Life on board a VOC ship was harsh. Rats, mice, fleas and lice caused sickness and discomfort. The holds of the ships reeked of vomit, diarrhoea and the stench of 200 to 300 unwashed sailors and soldiers. At times the conditions became unbearable for the crew. In 1688, the crew of the ship of the ship *Huis ter Eult*, complained to the captain, that they no longer wanted to sleep amongst the pigs. The men signed the complaint by marking a circle. This emphasised their solidarity and unity and made it impossible for the captain to single out the main conspirator from among them.

The cook and his mates together with the purser were responsible for the provisions and the preparation of food and drink. The food was salty, fatty and high in calories. It lacked vitamins, causing scurvy to be a major cause of death. It is true that lime juice, as a source of vitamin C, was taken on board, but this also turned out to spoil. It was not until the end of the eighteenth century that is was discovered that mixing it with rum was an excellent way of preserving lime juice in good condition. The fact that more alcohol was taken on board than usual, was accepted as part of the bargain.

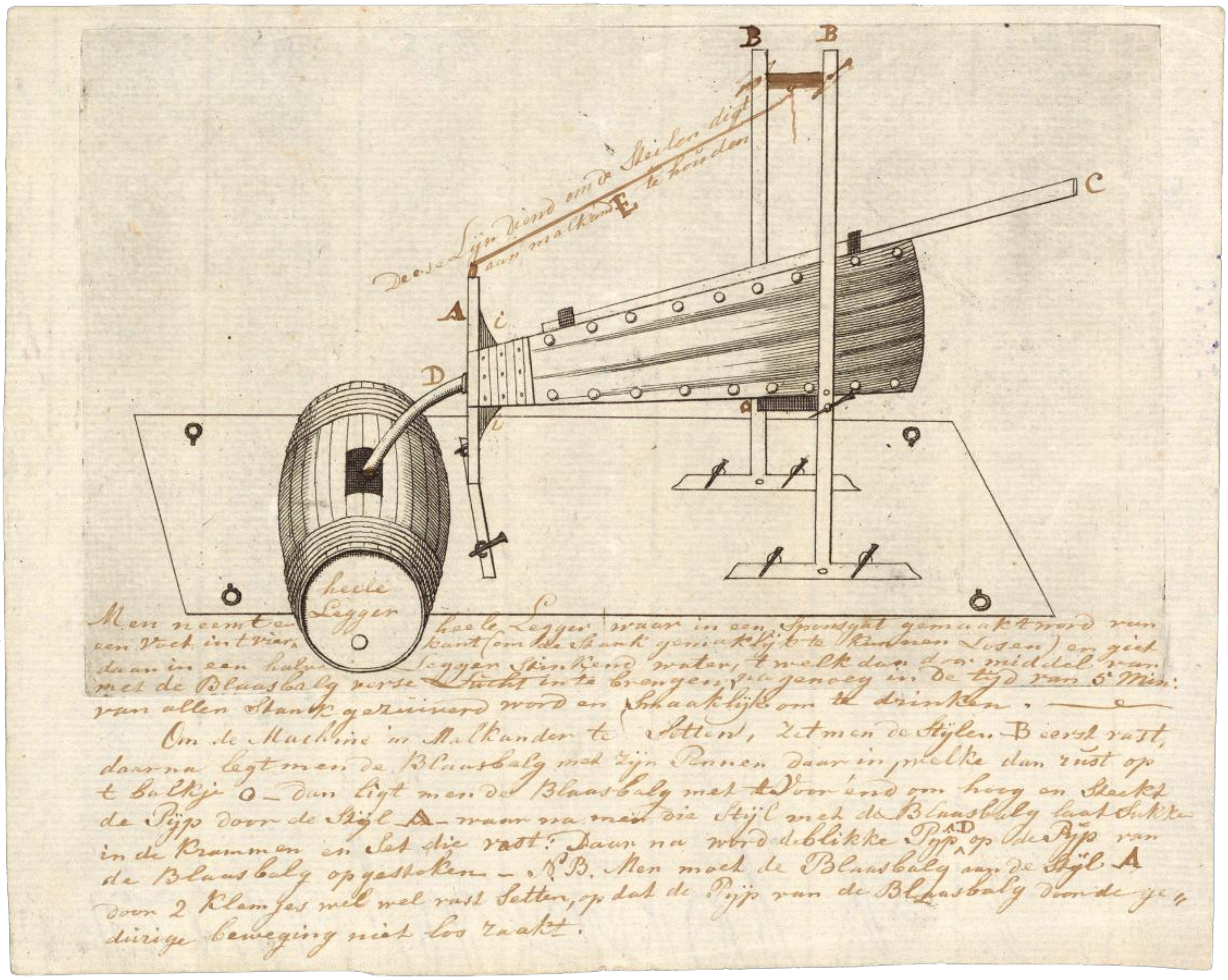
The average daily sustenance on board a VOC ship included groats and prunes, mixed with beer for breakfast. Then in the afternoon the cook served peas, beans and lard, sometimes accompanied by salted beef or fish. In the evening the leftovers were eaten with bread and ale. The crew on a VOC ship was divided into messes. They ate together from the same wooden bowl with carved wooden spoons. If you came too late, the mess would be empty. The men in one mess (7 to 10 men) also often worked together on board the ship.

Good drinking water was always scarce on board. The fresh water for ships came from the river De Vecht in Utrecht and the Wezenputten on Texel, and was loaded on board in casks. Each person was allotted around 400 liters of water for the voyage. The quality of the water deteriorated most quickly in the hot regions round the equator. It began to smell and bred large quantities of worms. To avoid swallowing vermin and worms, the crew had to drink water while holding their teeth together. Contamination of the drinking water reserves was another reason for the shipmates to drink alcohol, which did not spoil. Shortage of water was a serious threat to the crew's health and a major cause of disease and death.

A distilling apparatus that converted seawater into fresh drinking water was introduced at the end of the seventeenth century. A doctor from Amsterdam, Snoek, presented this machine called "waterworks" to the Gentlemen Seventeen. Partly due to the involvement of director Van Collem,



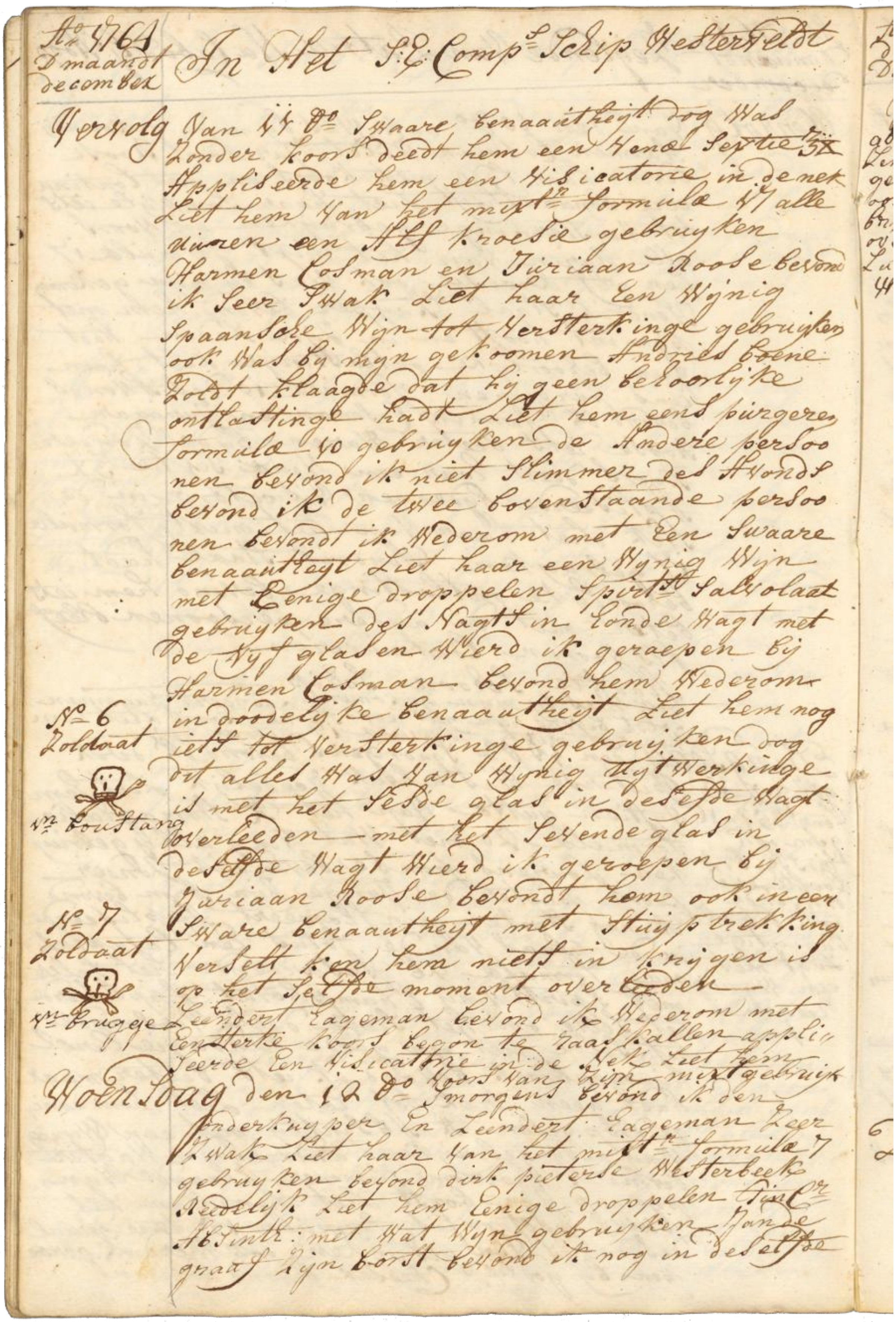
United against the captain, 1688. Archive of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), 1.04.02, inv. no. 2682. Sleeping amongst pigs and other inconveniences: the crew of the "Huis ter Eult" are fed up. They complain to the skipper. The men put their signature underneath the complaint in the shape of a circle. This emphasised their solidarity and unity and made it impossible for the captain to single out the main conspirator.



Instruction and information for the water workers, 1695. Archive of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), 1.04.02, inv. no. 4969. Drinking water must be used sparingly; only a limited supply can be taken on board, and in hot climates it spoils quickly. The crew had to drink the water with their teeth together in order not to swallow worms and other vermin. So, it was a great improvement when, at the end of the seventeenth century, a distilling machine appeared that could turn salt seawater into fresh drinking water. The water would then be "purified of all odours" and "tasty to drink".

the apparatus was indeed installed on the VOC ships. Logbooks show that scurvy occurred far less on ships that had the waterworks installed. Nevertheless, it was ultimately decided not to use the machine on a permanent basis.

Not only the equipment itself, but also the quantity of firewood it required took up too much valuable storage space. And moreover, the crew did not take well to this 'artificial water'. The average return ship took roughly 150 casks of 155 litres of ale on board. This amounted to over 23,000 litres or 80 litres per head. The light or pale ale was a safe alternative to drinking water, both on board and on shore. Each crew member drank two to three pints of beer –a litre and a half– in addition to wine and gin. The ship's surgeon also administered Spanish wine or brandy in medical emergencies. In order to maintain liquid on board a vessel, the VOC had a continuous demand for all kinds of wooden butts and casks, and had a wide network of coopers for this purpose. Food for the crew likewise had to remain fresh or at least edible during the entire sea voyage. It was therefore crucial where this food was stowed.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Zoldaat Versett kon hem niets in krygen is
op het Selfde moment overleeden
Vr Brugge Leendert Lageman bevond ik Wederom met
Een Sterke koors begon te Vaal kallen appli
Seerde Een Visicatorie in de Nek Liet hem
Woensdag den 12 Do koors Van Zyn mixt gebruik
'smorgens bevond ik den
onderkuyper En Leendert Lageman Zeer
Swak Liet haar Van het mixtr formula 7
gebruyken bevond dirk pieterse Westerbeek
Redelyk Liet hem Eenige droppelen Tinct
Absinth: met Wat Wyn gebruyken Van de
graaf Zyn borst bevond ik nog in deselfde

Journal of the ship's surgeon of the Westerveld,1764-1764. Archive of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), 1.04.02, inv. no. 11442. The ship's surgeon of the Westerveld, like all his colleagues, kept a record of the treatments and medicines used on board. In the margins of this "journal", skulls are used to indicate deaths. Ship's surgeons were responsible for the health of the crew; by the mid-eighteenth century, the VOC employed around 200 of them.

The sick and surgeons

Ship's surgeons were responsible for the health of the crew on board. They kept a record of the treatments, cures and medicines administered on board. Deaths were also registered in this journal; in such cases a skull would be drawn in the margin. In the middle of the eighteenth century the VOC employed about 200 ship's surgeons. On board they were confronted with the scourge of the sea: scurvy. In addition to purging and bloodletting, they combatted the disease by promoting the consumption of fresh meat, vegetables and fruit. It is now understood that only the latter is effective, but treatment with vitamin C was not always given consistently. Other frequent diseases and causes of death on board were dehydration, beriberi, typhus, malaria and sexually transmitted diseases. The surgeon was powerless against many of the illnesses and internal ailments. Yet there was an extensive apothecary of palliative treatments. A 'drooling cure' was used for the treatment of venereal disease. Ointment containing mercury was applied to the patient until he began to salivate, as the disease was believed to disappear with the saliva. The mercury poisening which the patient inevitably suffered was considered part of the bargain. On top of this, he had to pay the treatment of "venus disease" out of his own pocket.

Yet the image of the ship's surgeons as quacks or charlatans is not entirely accurate. Only the doctors who had studied at university, the 'doctores medicinae', enjoyed a higher status. Service on ship was considered to be beneath them. The comprehensive sea chest of the surgeon held a range of medications and instruments. Cornelis Solingen, a renowned surgeon of the VOC, personally crafted many of his instruments. His instrumentarium included a parrot-beaked forceps, intended to hold bones in place when resetting the fracture. A double saw was used for limb aputations and a jaw screw was designed to hold the patient's mouth open to stop the surgeon's fingers being bitten off during tooth extraction.

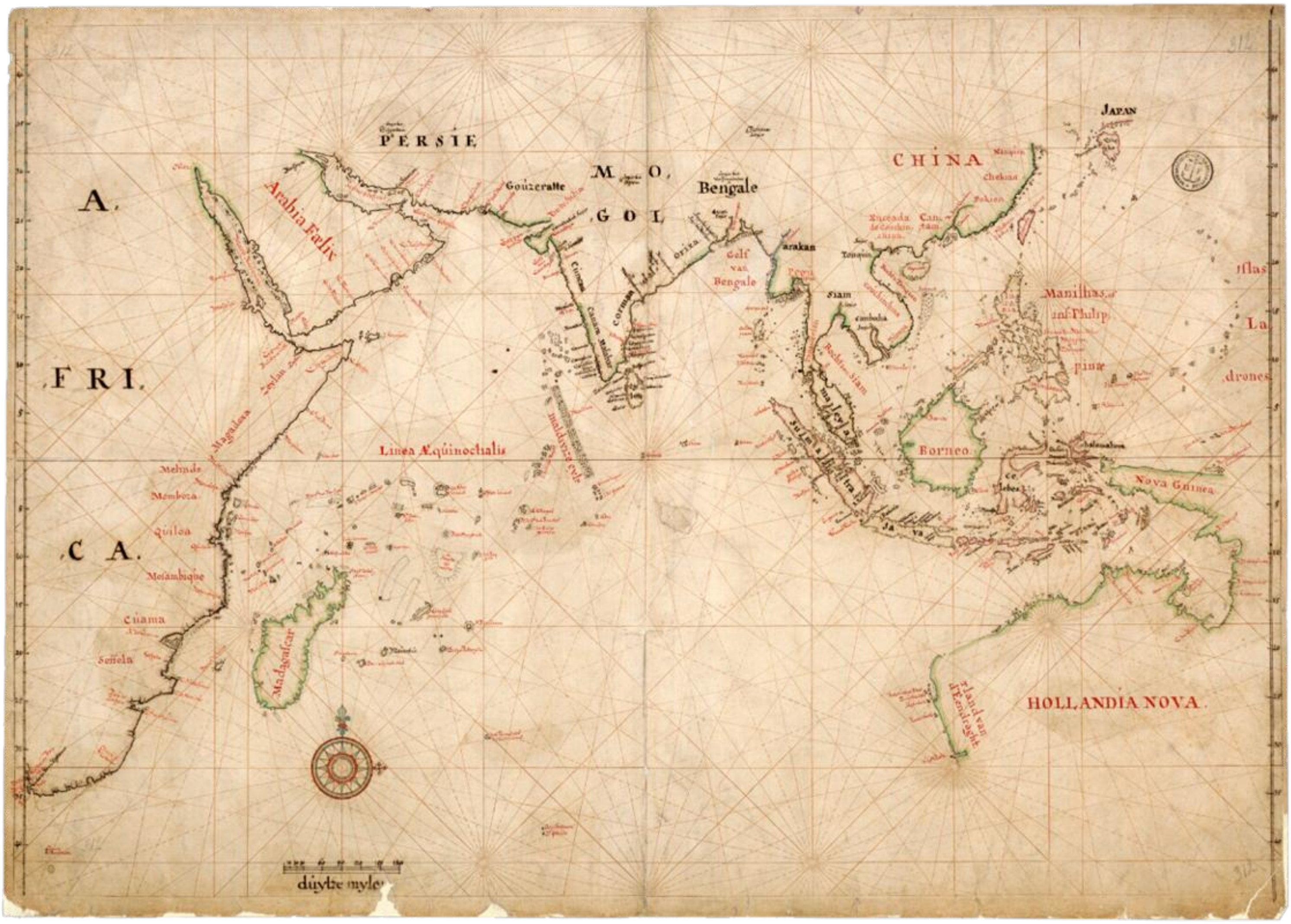
Chartered territories of the VOC and its outposts (factories)

Chartered territory

The first charter granted to the VOC by the States General granted the company exclusive trading rights for the Republic in the regions between Cape of Good Hope and the Magellan Strait, that is to say the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, for twenty years. Chambers or branches of the VOC were now located in the six cities that had previously founded or were founding earlier companies. Amsterdam, Zeeland (Middelburg), Rotterdam, Delft, Hoorn and Enkhuizen. The VOC was also granted the authority to conclude agreements on behalf of the States-General with the rulers within the chartered area, to wage wars and appoint local governors; all these were rights normally reserved for the state.

Factories

A factory is an old term for a trading office, warehouse or depository of merchandise established by Europeans in an overseas territory. In colonial times, factories were often built in the form of a fortress to protect trading interests. Below is an overview of the main areas and countries where the most important VOC factories were located. It is not exhaustive. For a complete overview, see the Atlas of Mutual Heritage (AMH) (www.AtlasofMutualHeritage.nl)



The chartered territory of the VOC, circa 1660. Collection of foreign maps Leupe, 4.VEL, inv. no. 312. This map from 1660 shows the chartered territory of the VOC. The map shows the area where only the VOC was allowed to trade on behalf of the States General: east of Africa and west of South America. The VOC charter describes it as follows: "Chartering and agreeing that no person of any kind or quality other than those of the aforesaid Company shall be allowed to sail out of these United Provinces within the period of twenty-one years from the first coming, beginning with this year 1602, east of the Cape of Good Hope or through the Strait of Magallanes, on pain of forfeiture of ships and merchandise".

www.AtlasofMutualHeritage.nl is a historical database with images of the VOC and the WIC. As the result of an extensive survey, this consists of two inventories:

– a summary of place names (posts, stations and fortresses) where the VOC and the WIC (West Indian Company) were settled in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, comprising more than 600 VOC settlements on the African and Asian coasts;
– an inventory of topographical images of these locations. For this purpose, collections of Rijksmuseum, Nationaal Archief, the Rijksdienst voor de Monumentenzorg (now the Cultural Heritage Agency, RCE) and the Koninklijke Bibliotheek (Royal Library), were researched for that purpose. The maps, drawings and prints found in travel journals and country descriptions were linked to place names and their coordinates in the database. Since its launch on the Internet in 1997, the AMH has been used by thousands of researchers every month, from Nagasaki to Cape Town.

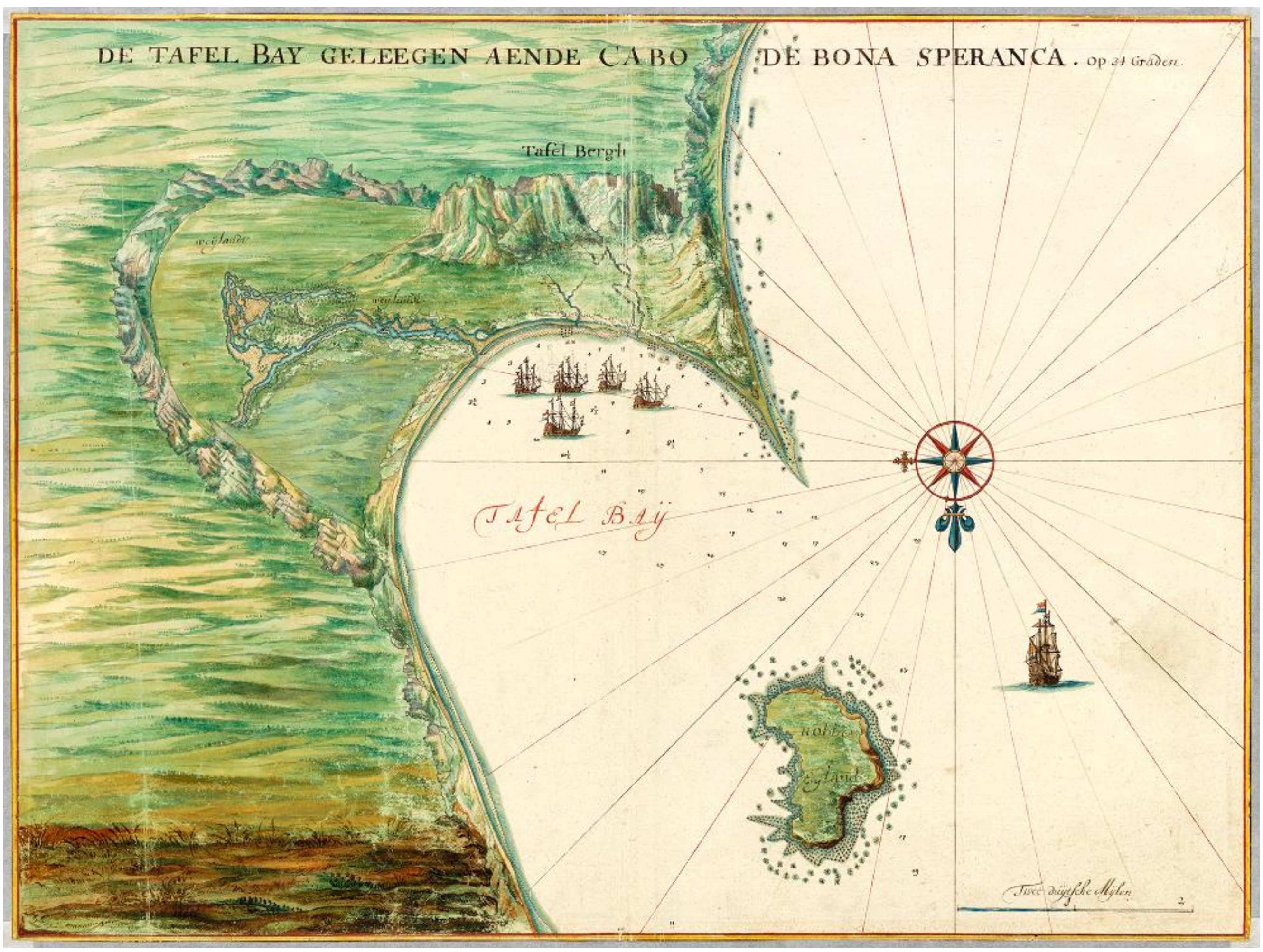
VOC trading areas

Africa, Cape of Good Hope

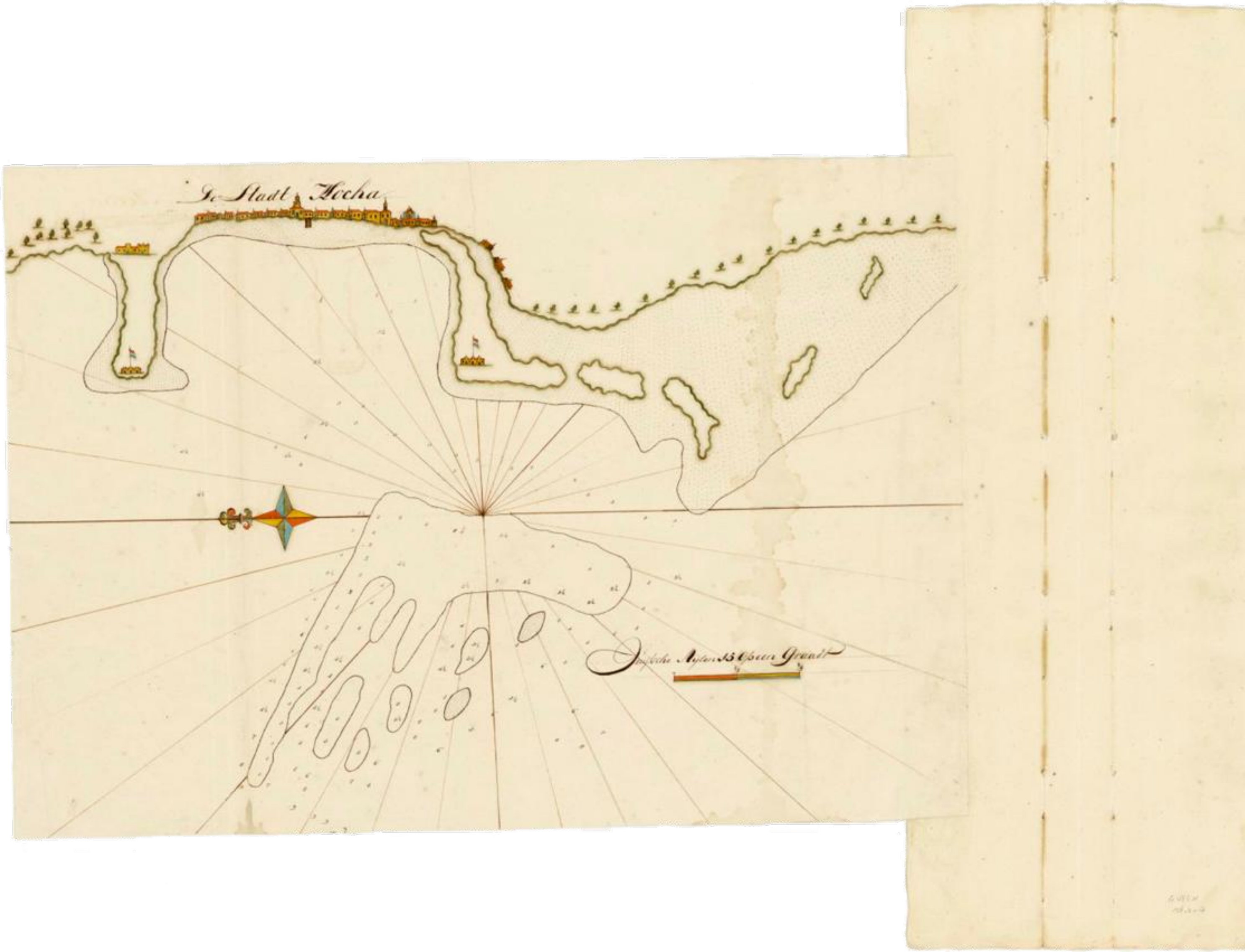
The Portuguese may have been the first Europeans to sail around southern Africa, but the VOC was the first to see the value of the area. The Cape of Good Hope, as the Portuguese called it, lays exactly halfway to Asia: the ideal place to stock up on vegetables, meat and drinking water. Such supplies were sorely needed, as the months-long voyage to Asia there was a severe shortage of fresh food. As a result, many crew members fell ill or died during the voyage.

In 1651, the VOC decided to take control of the food supply at the Cape. Jan van Riebeeck was commissioned to establish a refreshment station there. Together with ninety colonists, he built a fortress, established vegetable gardens, and bought cattle from the local Khoikhoi tribes.

Shipping to Asia increased, and soon the gardens could no longer provide enough fresh food for all the ships passing through. European farmers had to expand their farming operations inland. They settled in the Cape and were granted farmland; and the Cape grew into a colony. Over time, these Boers moved further and further inland. As a result, the original inhabitants –the KhoiSan– were forced to relocate to, less fertile areas. Between 1720 and the end of the eighteenth century, the colony's area increased tenfold, while the population grew from 2,000 to 15,000. Cape Town was taken over by the British in 1795.



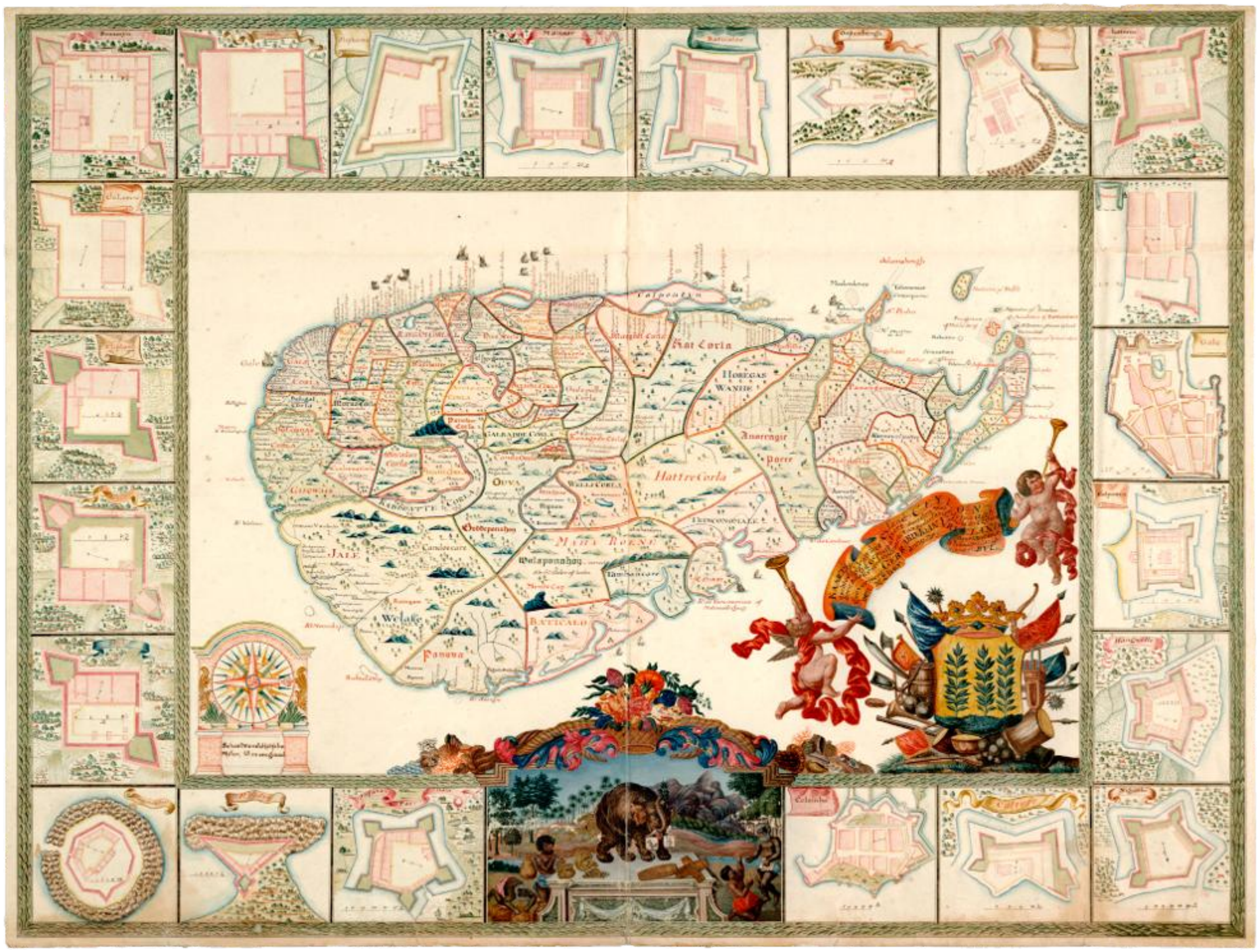
Map of Table Bay. Johannes Vingboons, c. 1665. Collection of Foreign Maps Leupe Supplement, 4.VEL, inv. no. 619.37. Dutch flags waving on ships in Table Bay. This map by Johannes Vingboons shows the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck in 1652. It is easy to see why the Dutch chose Table Bay for their settlement: ships could dock safely, and the surrounding mountains provided shelter and fresh drinking water. Table Mountain is also an easy landmark for navigators. Painter and cartographer Johannes Vingboons made his maps and drawings in his hometown of Amsterdam. He used sketches of the ship's crew as models.



The town of Mocha. Gerrit de Haan, 1761. Collection of Foreign Maps Leupe. Supplement, 4.VELH, inv. no. 156.2.17. For centuries, this small town on the Red Sea was the world's main coffee trading centre. This changed around 1700. The rise of coffee plantations in Asia and later in South America and conflicts with the Ottoman Empire meant the end of Mocha as a trading town.

Middle East, Mocha

Silk was the VOC's main product from the Persian Gulf region. The company also imported wool, wine, pearls, rose oil, Arabic gum, incense and coffee into Europe. But the Persian Gulf was also a lucrative outlet for merchandise from other parts of the VOC empire, such as textiles, pepper and sugar. The VOC office at Mocha, now Al Mukha, had been established since 1621. Trade suffered badly from the ever-changing political relationships. The VOC was dependent first on the Turkish rulers, and later on the Arab Yemenis who had freed themselves from the Turks. Attempts by the VOC to enforce trade by force were largely unsuccessful. It was not until the early eighteenth century that the office prospered, driven by the high demand for Mocha coffee in Europe. Until 1707, Mocha was under the control of Surat. It was in the town of Mocha that the VOC merchant Pieter van den Broecke first encountered the aroma of coffee beans in 1614. At the time, coffee was unknown in Europe. As the drink became increasingly popular among Europeans from 1650 onwards, Mocha emerged as a key coffee supplier.



Map of Dutch fortress in Ceylon. Baltus Jacobsz van Lier, 1751. Maps and Drawings Ministry of Colonies, 4.MIKO, inv. no. W 42. Cinnamon and elephants are Ceylon's principal trade products. The fortress along the coast were designed to protect the VOC's trading position.

Ceylon, Colombo

Cinnamon was one of the main reasons for the VOC to focus on Ceylon, now Sri Lanka. The problem however, was that the Portuguese dominated in the cinnamon trade. With the help of the local king of Kandy, the VOC managed to oust the Portuguese. The Dutch immediately took over as world leaders in the cinnamon trade. For a century and a half, Ceylon remained a very important and profitable area for the company. In addition to cinnamon, elephants were also a significant trade commodity.

Colombo, the capital of Ceylon, was a busy centre of trade and administration during the VOC era. Nowhere else in Asia was the VOC so extensively involved in the governance of a territory as in Ceylon. The VOC administration in Ceylon faced constant challenges from the Kandy kingdom. In 1795 Ceylon was taken over by the British.

Detail: Cinnamon huskers removing the bark of a cinnamon tree, with an elephant between them. Baltus Jacobsz van Lier, 1751. Maps and Drawings Ministry of Colonies, 4.MIKO, inv. no. W 42, detail. The natives catch and train elephants in a corral, a fenced area with tame elephants into which the wild elephants are lured. They catch the animals around Galle and Jaffna, where the elephants live in the wild. Elephants are popular with Indian royalty. They are Ceylon's second most important export after cinnamon.

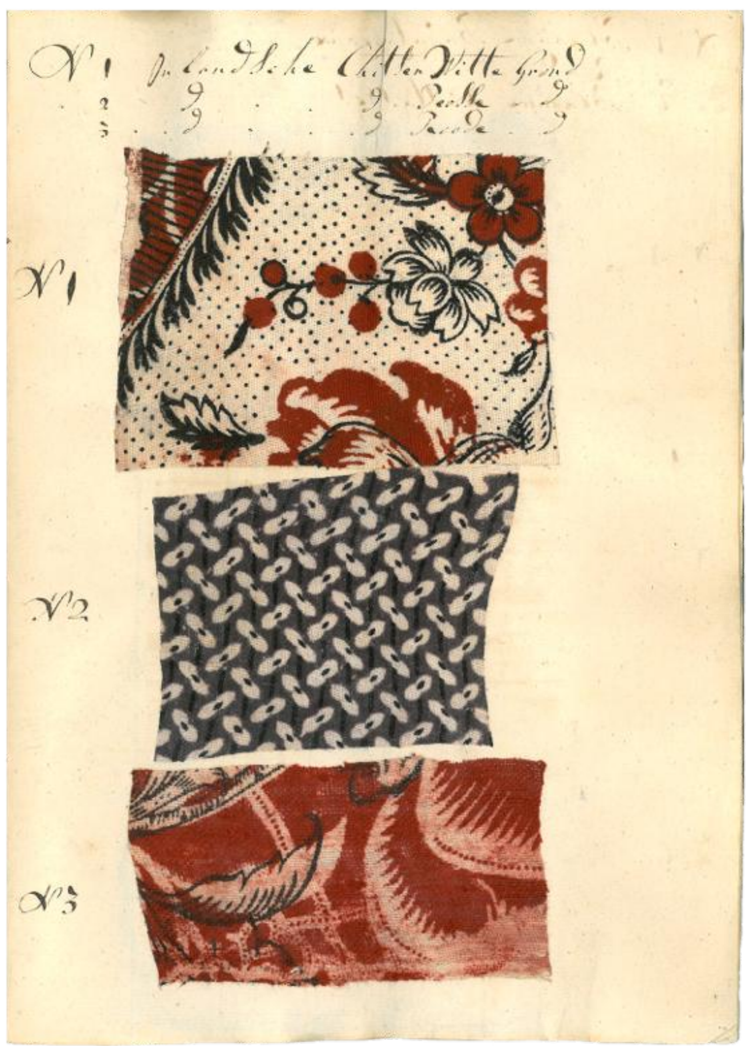
India, Pulicat

Exotic textiles –either in colourful floral prints or plain colours– lured the VOC to the Coromandel Coast, India's extensive east coast. The VOC tried to establish a foothold there but failed to secure a monopoly on the cloth trade. The Portuguese, English and French also possessed fortresses and trading posts on India's east coast. Competition was so fierce that it occasionally led to armed conflicts. To secure trade, the VOC did its best to keep local rulers friendly.

Indian textiles are important to the enslaved people trade between Africa and the Americas. They were used as currency in West Africa: textiles from the Coromandel Coast were exchanged for enslaved people. Indian textiles were therefore shipped to Africa in large quantities, the "Guineesch lijwaat" (Guinean linseed).

In 1610, Pulicat became the headquarters on the Coromandel Coast, with a number of smaller factories under it. Together these factories formed a cartel against the threat of rival Portuguese and local rulers. Throughout the first half of the seventeenth century, the VOC was involved in a series of flaring civil wars over succession to the throne in the area. However, after several conflicts with the local rulers of Pulicat, the company was granted permission to build a fortress.

Pulicat remained the VOC headquarters on the Coromandel Coast until 1687, when the Governor relocated to Negapatnam. When the British took Negapatnam in 1781, Pulicat again became the capital of the Coromandel Governorate.



Samples of Cloth 1787, product for buying enslaved people. Archive of the Second Dutch West India Company (WIC). 1.05.01.02, inv. No. 179. The Dutch West India Company was involved in the slave trade across the Atlantic. But the VOC also played a part in this.

View of Batavia. Johannes Vingboons,1665. Collection of Foreign Maps Leupe. Supplement, 4.VELH, inv. no. 619.32. To make a fortress in a few years and return to Holland a rich man. This is undoubtedly the dream of many VOC employees when they first arrive in Batavia. But few make this dream come true. Most stay in Asia and find their final resting place there.

East Indies, Batavia

The VOC's trading activities began in Ambon and the Moluccas, where the company made its first commercial contacts in the East Indies. The most prized and valuable spices were found there: nutmeg, mace, cloves and pepper. Lucrative trade required efficient organisation, prompting the creation of central headquarters. The post of governor-general, the VOC's general manager in Asia, was established, with the town of Bantam serving as his headquaters.

After governor-general Jan Pieterszoon Coen conquered Jayakarta in 1619, he founded the city of Batavia, which became the new headquarters of the VOC.

Jan Pieterszoon Coen had one objective in mind: to make the VOC a commercial success. With his organisational talent, enormous determination, and ruthless ferocity, he conquered the trade monopolies. Praised and reviled, Coen remains the most famous and controversial figure in the history of the VOC.

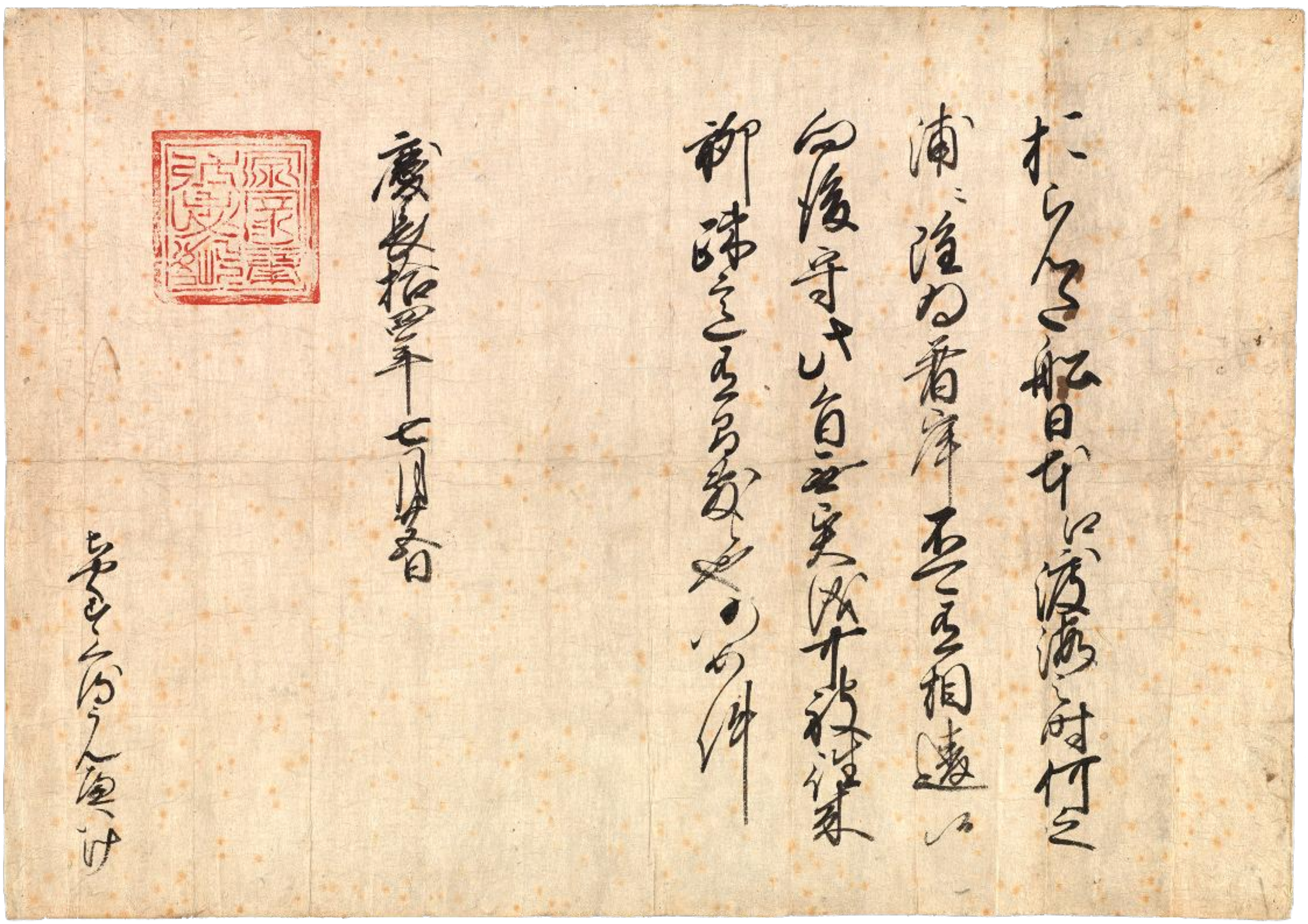
Batavia had a European character, with bridges spanning canals and warehouses along the waterfront. There were also many European institutions such as orphanages, churches and hospitals. By 1700 the city had grown enormously: it was home to 70,000 people, of whom only 6,000 were of non-Asian origin. By the early seventeenth century, Batavia had surpassed Bantam as a trading centre. It became Java's largest port, a warehouse for merchandise from all over Asia. It was here that money and merchandise from Europe were distributed, while merchandise from the various settlements were transported to Batavia and shipped to the Republic. Batavia also played an important role in inter-Asian trade. The castle in Batavia served as the location for the commercial and administrative affairs of the VOC were discussed. It was here that decisions were made regarding the supplies required by factories and offices in Asia. It was also where the annual reports, the General Missives, were written by the governor-general together with the Council of the Indies, the ever-growing trading network in Asia.

Japan, Deshima

A trade passage granted by the Japanese Shôgun of 1609 marked the beginning of a special relationship between the Netherlands and Japan. For more than two centuries, the Dutch have enjoyed the privilege of being the only Westerners to settle and trade in Japan. For the Japanese, the Dutch were their only contact with the Western world, with the VOC serving as the linchpin of this relationship.

The Japanese VOC monopoly was subject to several conditions. For example, the VOC was required to undertake an annual "court trip" as a tribute to the Japanese shôgun. During this visit, they reported on foreign news and brought back gifts such as textiles, spices, books, instruments, animals and curiosities.

On the Japanese island of Hirado, François Caron (1600-1671) became head of the VOC trading post. When the Japanese authorities decided to close the country to all foreigners, they made an exception for the Dutch. This was probably due to Caron's diplomatic skills and



Trade pass of the Japanese shogun, 24 August 1609. Dutch factory in Japan, 1.04.21, inventory number 1A. In 1609, the VOC ships Griffioen (the Griffin) and Rode Leeuw met Pijlen (the Red Lion with Arrows) arrived in Japan under the command of Jacques Groenewegen. They had a mission: to conclude a trade treaty. Nine years earlier, the crew of the ship De Liefde (Love) received a friendly welcome, so they now expect the same. And rightly so, as the shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu shows his hospitality and grants the Dutch permission to trade on behalf of the emperor. This is recorded in this trade pass.

his knowledge of Japanese customs and sensitivities. Although the VOC had to leave Hirado, they were allowed to stay in Japan. The small island of Decima in the bay of Nagasaki became the new settlement for the Dutch. The VOC employees were only allowed to leave Deshima for the annual court trip to the Shogun in Edo and for occasional excursions under Japanese supervision. Conversely, Japanese were not allowed on Deshima except for a few officials, interpreters, and Japanese entertainment girls. In Japan, the chief trader oversaw all commercial activities and acted as head of the settlement in Japan. The Deshima office was the largest supplier of precious metals in Asia in the seventeenth century. From 1672, the governor of Nagasaki set the prices of imported goods, and simultaneously banned the export of silver. This made the trade increasingly unprofitable for the VOC, but smuggling flourished. During the eighteenth century, private trade gradually gained the upper hand in Japan.

China and Formosa

However, China showed no interest. The company's assumption that it could achieve anything here by force proved to be a misconception. The VOC's aggressive attitude in the seventeenth century ultimately backfired. Nevertheless, Zeelandia soon became a promising settlement. Chinese merchants brought porcelain, silk and gold, and when it was discovered that Formosa was rich in deer, a profitable trade in deer skins to Japan was started. From then on, mainland Formosa came under the administration of Fortress Zeelandia. The town of Zeelandia was built next to the fortress, with a weighbridge, a market hall, a hospital and an orphanage. Formosa became the VOC's first real colony in Asia.

Formosa was a governorate from 1624 to 1662. The governor was based at Fortress Zeelandia in An-Ping. Most of Formosa's income came from trade with Chinese merchants. The VOC sold them mainly spices and silver in exchange for porcelain, gold and silk. In addition, the island itself became an increasingly important source of income. The growing number of Chinese migrants from the mainland started to cultivate sugar cane, indigo and rice. Sugar was shipped by the VOC to India, Persia and Europe. Eventually, the taxes that the VOC levied on the Chinese trade and the leasing of land and hunting and fishing rights accounted for almost 40 percent of Zeelandia's total income. The Dutch period on Formosa came to an end in 1661-1662, as an indirect result of the fall of the Ming dynasty and the accompanying civil war in China. In late April 1661, the Chinese warlord Koxinga, who sought to restore the Ming dynasty in China and was therefore at war with the newly established Qing dynasty, invaded Formosa in search of a safe haven for his armies.

The finest silk came from China, but the Chinese emperor forbade foreign trading posts on his territory. The VOC, however, devised a ruse: in 1624 they established a trading post, Fortress Zeelandia, on a small peninsula off the coast of what is today An-Ping on Formosa, now Taiwan. The island lies to the south of China, making it an ideal base for trade with China and Japan. Chinese traders brought silk, porcelain and opium.

For years the trading post prospered, until 1661, when the Chinese military leader Kok seng yâ (Coxinga) disrupted its operations. He attacked with a huge force, and the reigning VOC governor, Frederik Coyett, was trapped in the fortress with 1,200 soldiers. They held out for nine months but were eventually defeated and surrendered in 1662. Coyett fled to Batavia and Formosa was lost to the VOC.

Coxinga landed at An-Ping and isolated the Dutch in their fortress, soon gaining control of much of the island's west coast. Fortress Zeelandia was besieged for another ten months before finally being forced to surrender in January 1662. This marked the end of the Dutch presence in An-Ping.

With Formosa lost, the VOC had no choice but to find other ways to trade with China. The VOC sent special trade missions to the emperor to strengthen ties with China. It was not until 1725 that China would allow direct trade with other countries, but only under strict conditions and on a limited scale. At this time, China's main interest for the VOC was as a major producer of tea, that had become very popular in Europe, sparking a true 'tea rush'.

Anno 1739. Carga, ofte Ladinge van het Oost-Indisch Retour-Schip HOGERSMILDE, voor de Kamer Amsterdam. Zynde den 21 December 1738. van Canton in China vertrokken; en op den 25 Augustus 1739. behouden in 't Texel gearriveert.

10622	Paren Chocolaatgoed divers.
1935	Trekpotten divers.
65005	Paren Coffygoed divers.
65095	Paren Theegoed divers.
1356	Boterpotten met deksels en schotels.
1178	Stelletjes van 3 Potten en 2 Beekers.
200	Nesten Kommen met deksel en Onderkommen van 3 in 't Nest.
2939	Soupborden.
296	Tafelservisen divers.
407	Thee Servisen divers.
10	Vasen met Deksels en Waterbakken.
6160	Dubbelde Tafelborden divers.
12000	Enkelde Tafelborden divers.
36570	Spoelkommen divers.
2800	Nesten Suykerpotten met deksels van 3 in 't Nest.
240	Kamerpotten divers.
12	Kassen Lakwerken divers.
110262	℔ Spiaulter.
17921	℔ Paarlmoer-Schelpen.
25899	℔ Radix China.
274877	℔ Thee Boey.
56131	℔ Thee Congo.
12980	℔ Thee Chauson.
10442	℔ Thee Pecoe.
18644	℔ Thee Groene.
8256	℔ Thee Hysant.
10475	℔ Thee Bing.

t'Amsterdam, by *R.* en *G. Wetstein*, Drukkers van d'E. E. Heeren Bewindhebberen der Oost-Indische Compagnie.

Cargo list of the Hogersmilde, including many types of porcelain and several types of tea, 1739. Archive of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), 1.04.02, inv. no. 5004. The VOC's trade with China was conducted from Dutch Fortress Zeelandia on Formosa. The silk trade was handled by Chinese merchants, who also offered the Dutch porcelain, gold, ginger, opium, sappan wood and alumina. The Chinese, in turn, were interested in pepper, spices, sandalwood, cotton cloth, tin and ivory. They also buy deer skins in Formosa to make armour. It was not until 1725 that China allowed direct trade with other countries, but only under strict conditions and on a limited scale. Canton became the centre of the VOC's China trade in the eighteenth century.

The financial administration of the VOC. Series of ledgers. Archive of the Dutch East India Company (VOC). 1.04.02. Photographer Marcel Dolman.

The VOC archives

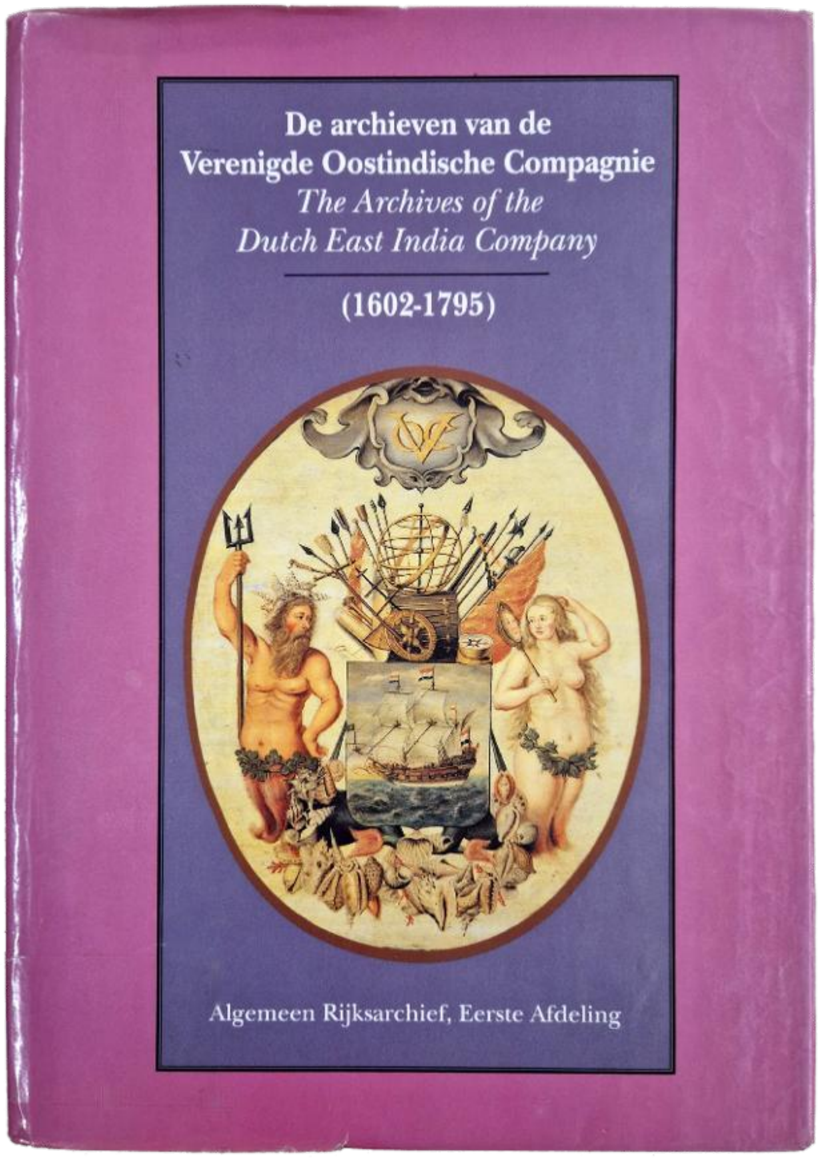
The paper record of the VOC's activities is impressive. It provides information not only about business management, but also about the political, cultural, religious and social conditions in the areas where the VOC operated. Within the VOC's vast chartered territory, information was frequently exchanged with the VOC posts and administrative centres in Batavia and the Netherlands. It is estimated that about 25 million historical pages of the VOC archives are still preserved today in archival repositories in Jakarta, Colombo, Chennai, Cape Town and The Hague.

In some Asian territories the VOC archive are the major source of economic, political and social history of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is for this reason that UNESCO included the complete VOC archives in the Memory of the World Register in 2003. Even today, traces of the VOC can be found in people, buildings and landscapes across many parts of the world.

To make this invaluable part of our heritage accessible, the VOC archive at the National Archives of the Netherlands in The Hague was completely digitised and made available online between 2015 and 2017. Which makes this vital world heritage globally accessible.

One of the largest, most extraordinary and most consulted collections within the National Archives of the Netherlands are the Dutch East India Company (VOC) archives. These archives form part of a wider collection scattered around the world, notably in Jakarta (2,500 m), The Hague (1,200 m), Cape Town (450 m), Colombo (310 m) and Chennai (64 m). Together, the archives cover more than 4,500 linear metres and contain 25 million pages of information on dozens of countries in Asia and southern Africa in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They shed light on the economic history of the Dutch Republic, but are also an invaluable source for the political, administrative and military historiography of the Asian countries that were in the VOC's chartered territory.

For some regions in Asia, they are even the only source. For this reason, the complete VOC archives were inscribed in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register in 2004. Nowhere else in the world



The archives of the Dutch East India Company = The archives of the Dutch East India Company: (1602-1795). Meilink-Roelofsz, M.A.P. / Sdu Publishers / 1992.

is such a wealth of information on Asia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to be found.

Archives located abroad, except for those in Cape Town, are often in poor physical condition. The National Archives therefore works closely with other archives to improve their condition and accessibility, and to preserve skills such as palaeography (the reading of early manuscripts).

Over the years, many archivists at the General State Archives were involved in describing and organising the VOC archives. After the transfer of the archives in 1856, J.K.J. de Jonge was the first to take charge. He left his successors considerable work by separating the bindings of letters and papers that had come from the East Indies to the Gentlemen Seventeen and the Chamber of Amsterdam up to 1690. From 1690 onwards, it became common practice to produce tables of contents of the letters and papers that had arrived. To simplify consultation of the documents from before 1690, De Jonge removed all the volumes up to 1659 and the volumes from the Westerkwartieren from 1660 to 1690. He then rearranged these records according to settlement, which made it impossible to identify their provenance and interrelationship of the records. Around the turn of the century this work was reversed by J.E. Heeres and H.T. Colenbrander.

The first inventory was created in the 1970s by former naval officer P.A. Leupe. However, it was not a true inventory; it functioned more as a catalogue of documents form the VOC archives and other East Indian archives.

The VOC archive contains a vast amount of ledgers, journals, cash books and balance sheets. Together, they form a treasure trove of information about the financial ins and outs of the VOC. Archive of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), 1.04.02. Photographer Marcel Dolman.

It was Mrs M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofsz who broke the silence in 1937. She was entrusted with a new inventory of the Zeeland archives of the Chamber. As the VOC archives were not numbered according to the Heeres and Colenbrander inventory when the State Archives were moved from Plein to Bleijenburg in 1901, it had become very difficult to consult the Zeeland archives based on the existing inventory. A new inventory was therefore necessary. Mrs Meilink-Roelofszaan did most of the work of describing the series of documents that had arrived from the offices in the East Indies to the Zeeland Chamber archives. She also edited the manuscript inventory compiled by Heeres and Colenbrander of the Amsterdam archives of the Chamber and (re)inventoried the financial documents and the so-called loose documents of both Chambers. By 1963 she had completed her inventory of the VOC archives. More than a hundred years after the records had been transferred to the Algemeen Rijksarchief; resulting in the first complete inventory.

A few years later, based on this new inventory, the archives were numbered consecutively. The inventory –nine volumes in typescript– significantly increased the accessibility to the VOC archives and stimulated research into Dutch overseas and Asian history. The last major inventory of the archives took place in 1992 and resulted in the inventory 1.04.02 Inventory of the archives of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), 1602-1795 (1811).

Search the VOC archives for yourself!

The VOC archive in the Dutch National Archives in The Hague is virtually an inexhaustible source for historical research. With the entire archive now digitised, access to the material has become much easier. Anyone, whether at home or anywhere in the world, can view and study the document and charts via the website of the National Archives (www.gahetna.nl). Nevertheless, the archive remains vast and still requires some navigation. A few tips may be helpful to interested parties.

Ancestors who were connected to the VOC?

The Dutch archive of the VOC is arranged according to the division of the company into Chambers. The archives of the Amsterdam and Zeeland chambers are the most completely preserved ones. The contents are in the first instance the minutes from the directors' meetings, known as the *resolutions*. The remainder consists of documents from the committees and departments who were responsible for the daily governance of the company, such as the equipage department (which handled ship building and provisioning). Each VOC Chamber kept its own personnel administration but followed centrally determined rules. The basis of the salary administration was the ship's payroll, in which the personal detail and wages of all paid shipmates on VOC vessels were recorded. Each employee's account opens on the date the ship left the quay and closes on the date of payment. These records are frequently used for genealogical research. Various search tools and databases have also been created to facilitate access tot the VOC archives:

– *VOC shipmates*
  This database holds information on the crew and passengers aboard ships sailing to the East between 1700 and 1795. Random tests have shown that a little under half of all shipmates came from the Republic of the United Netherlands, while soldiers hailed predominantly from the German-speaking regions. During the course of the eighteenth century, an increasing number of recruits came from regions farther inland.
– *East Indian Last Wills*
  This database refers to 51 manuscripts in the VOC archive which hold almost 11,000 Last Wills, drafted by notaries at VOC stations in East India in the period from 1698 to 1807.
– *Sent letters and documents*
  The largest and most intensively used part of the VOC archive is the collection of *Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren* (Sent Letters and Documents). This contains the journals, reports, letters and other documents sent from Asia and Africa to the Netherlands to keep the governors informed of the state of the business overseas.

Every VOC office, from the Cape to Nagasaki, was required to regularly report on the trade, the local nations, the war and diplomacy and its own activities following the shipping schedule in missives (official letters). This information was summarised into general missives in Batavia. These missives were dispatched with the homeward convoys to the VOC authorities in the Republic. The *Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren* are the most significant sources for the early-modern history of Asia.

– *Maps and drawings*

In addition to the 1200 linear metres of manuscript material, Nationaal Archief also holds the largest collection of VOC charts, comprising around 4000 charts, maps, drawings and 40 atlases. These charts were sent via Batavia to the directors in the Netherlands and from the backbone of the present maps and drawings collection from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The most practical access to all this material is via the historical database: the "*Atlas of Mutual Heritage*".

VEL. Collection of foreign maps Leupe, 1584-1813 (1865)

In his "Inventaris der verzameling kaarten berustende in het Rijksarchief. Eerste supplement", (Inventory of the collection of maps held in the National Archives. First supplement), P.A. Leupe described the archive maps from the period before 1813 relating to areas outside the Netherlands. To this end, he gathered the "foreign maps" from the various early modern archives into one collection, which is now known as the "Leupe Collection".

In addition to nautical atlases and map books, this collection contains printed, but mainly manuscript maps and drawings. The collection is of exceptional importance as it contains most of the map archives of the Dutch East India Company.

VELH. Collection of foreign maps Leupe, Supplement, 1621-1813 (1925)

After the publication of the printed inventory of the Leupe Collection (4.VEL), maps belonging to this collection were regularly discovered. The General State Archives also occasionally acquired early modern foreign maps through purchases and donations. All these additions, then known as "Indian acquisitions", were described in 1914 by S.P. l'Honoré-Naber in his "Inventaris der verzameling kaarten berustende in het Rijksarchief. Eerste supplement".

Archives elsewhere

In the Netherlands

The Dutch National Archive has a large collection of VOC material, but much about the VOC can also be found outside the Dutch National Archive, both in the Netherlands and abroad.

– Stadsarchief Amsterdam: a number of documents relating to the VOC can be found in the mayors' archives.
– Utrecht Archive: includes the papers of Joan Huydecoper van Maarsseveen, VOC administrator in the second half of the seventeenth century.
– Zeeland Archive: the Zeeland Archive holds various VOC documents; the archive has an overview page with descriptions of VOC-related documents.
– Leiden University Library: The collections of the Leiden University Library include the Bodel Neijenhuis map collection with various VOC maps and the collection of Governor-General Joan van Hoorn.

Abroad

– Indonesia's National Archives, Arsip Nasional, holds the largest collection of VOC documents in the world. Part of it has been scanned and can now be viewed online at the Sejarah-Nusantara site.
– The National Archives of Sri Lanka in Colombo holds the records of the VOC governorate of Ceylon.

- Cape Town: The Western Cape Archives holds the archives of the VOC in South Africa. These are mainly the records of the local administration. Unfortunately, a good inventory is not (yet) available online.
- The Tamil Nadu Archives in Chennai holds a collection of VOC material from the settlements in India. Some of this has been digitised and can be viewed on the NA website (1.11.06.11).

Online sources

- In the past, important parts of the VOC archives have been transcribed and published in the green series of Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatiën (RGP). These can be consulted at the Information Centre of the National Archives or via historici.nl.
- Dutch Sources on South Asia: This publication describes archival material on the history of India and Sri Lanka in Dutch language sources.
- Great Atlas of the Dutch East India Company, 2006-2010 (7 volumes). Revised digital edition 2020-2021:
  Part I: Atlas Isaak de Graaf/Atlas Amsterdam
  Part II: Java and Madura
  Part III: Indian Archipelago and Oceania
  Part IV: Ceylon
  Part V: Africa
  Part VI: Pre-India, Persia, Arabian Peninsula
  Part VII: East Asia, Burma to Japan Supplement
- De Vroedschap van Amsterdam: a classic from 1903-1905 by J.E. Elias. It describes all the members of the regent patriciate of Amsterdam, including a large number of VOC administrators.
- *Generale missiven:* transcribed documents from the "Generale Missiven van Gouverneur-Generaal en Raden van Indië", the original of which can be found in the VOC archives (1.04.02) in the National Archives.
- The Dutch in Kerala: a source publication containing the surrender notes of the VOC commanders in Malabar in the period 1663-1703.
- Pieter van Dam's *Beschryvinge van de Oost-Indische Compagnie*.
- Many VOC maps, both from the National Archives and other collections, can be found in the Atlas of Mutual Heritage, together with recent photographs and excavation reports.
- Huygens ING also offers a VOC Glossary, a list of explanations of terms used in the RGP series on the VOC.

There are also projects that have made quantitative data on ships, cargo, voyage times and destinations from the VOC archives accessible via databases:

- Dutch-Asiatic Shipping (DAS): a survey of shipping between the Netherlands and Asia. Information from this can also be found in the database at vocsite.nl.

Links to websites and databases

- VOC knowledge centre
  https://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/VOC_Kenniscentrum/index_html_en
- Atlas of Mutual Heritage: The most complete overview documentation about the Dutch East India Company (VOC)
  https://www.atlasofmutualheritage.nl/en/

VOC archives in the world

- Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, Jakarta – 2.500m
  https://anri.go.id/search
- National Archives of Sri Lanka, Colombo – 310m
  https://www.archives.gov.lk/web/index.php?lang=en
- Tamil Nadu Archives, Chennai, India – 64m
  https://www.tnarchives.tn.gov.in/
- Kaapse Argiefbewaarplek/Western Cape Archives and Records Service, Zuid-Afrika,-Kaapstad – 450m
  https://www.westerncape.gov.za/cape-archives
- National Archive The Hague The Netherlands
  https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/1.04.02
- Database VOC-shipmates

https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/index/nt00444?activeTab=nt

- East Indian last wills
  https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/zoekhulpen/voc-testamenten-1698-1807
- VOC: sent letters and documents, 1609-1795
  https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/zoekhulpen/voc-overgekomen-brieven-en-papieren-1609-1795

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Felix-Archief




The archives of the Chamber of Insolvent Estates

Inscribed in the UNESCO "Memory of the World"
Register on July 30, 2009

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
Memory of the World

Paris ce 10e. Xbre 1644

...greeable du 25e. du passé par la q.lle Je voy

...e de 11. ou 12. pie de serge de Chaalonne l...

...eur Commodité Je espere tous Moyens de...

...tous pouvez gaynir quelque chose sy

... commander Moy tibraw comme a celuy ...

Votre tres humble ser...

Mabre...

The archives of the Chamber of Insolvent Estates

Which documents survive the passage of time? A line can be drawn here. Public administration archives have a clear advantage. They are kept by institutions with a long history, considerable power and often a legal obligation to keep them in perpetuity.

Which documents are more likely to be forgotten? “Money rules the world”. Documents that record property, income and contracts in writing are much more likely to survive.

But what slips through our fingers like sand? Everyday life, emotions and worries, the common man and his struggle for existence.

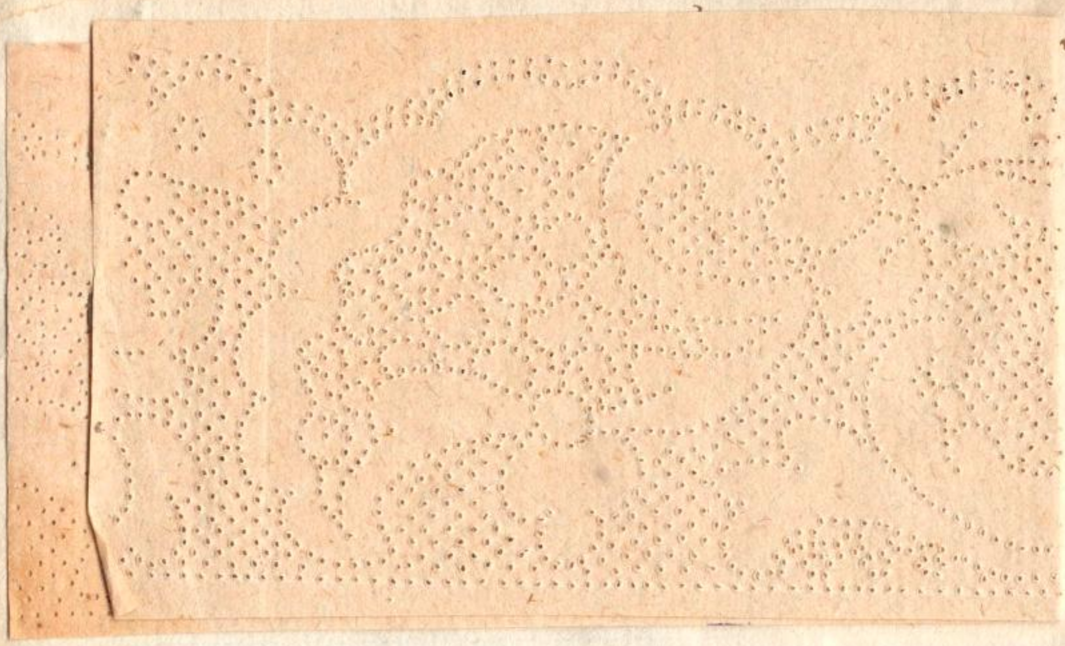
This is what makes the archives of the Chamber of Insolvent Estates so unique. 402 metres of documents covering three centuries give us a view of large and small businesses and tradesmen, of their daily lives and worries. Letter after letter in correspondence, booking after booking in accounts, diary entry after diary entry, we see the protagonists building and losing their lives. We get a picture of their small or surprisingly large world.

In this way, the archives of the Chamber of Insolvent Estates remain an inexhaustible source of answers to ever-changing historical questions. From the 1960s to the 1980s, the focus was on commercial activities, but now we are seeing more studies on mentality and material culture.

Undoubtedly, this publication will also attract other researchers to study these archives. I sincerely hope that this book will trigger a European cross-fertilisation that will make us look at our common history with new eyes.

Marie Juliette Marinus
Director of the Antwerp City Archives FelixArchief
and City Archivist of the City Archives of Antwerp

del zÿde - - - /:11:18



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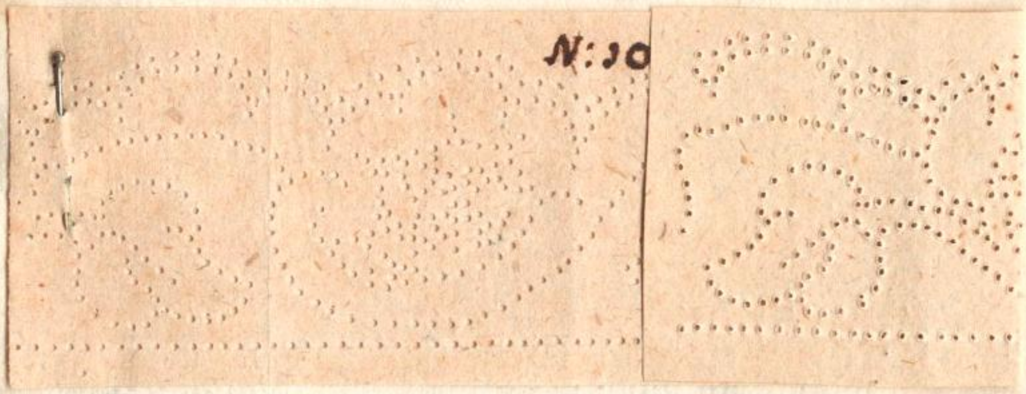

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Trading companies gathered in the Chamber of Insolvent Estates

Natalie De Bruyn
Content Management Consultant, FelixArchief
Antwerp City Archives

When you think of Antwerp, you think of trade and port. In the sixteenth century, Antwerp became a world port and a hub for merchants from all over Europe. Not far from the river Scheldt is a building that bears witness to this commercial activity. A nineteenth century warehouse built to store merchandise such as coffee, grain and tobacco, and characterised by a unique internal street that separates and connects the two parts of the warehouse: the Sint-Felix Warehouse (in Dutch: Sint-Felix-pakhuis).

Today, the Sint-Felix Warehouse no longer stores bulk goods, but dozens of kilometres of municipal documents: the memory of the city. Since 2006, the Antwerp City Archives have been known as the FelixArchief, a fusion of building and archive.

The FelixArchief preserves and makes accessible both centuries-old and contemporary documents. In addition to the archives of the various city departments, there are also private archives of Antwerp families, companies and partnerships. One of these private collections is so special that it was included in the UNESCO's "Register of World Memory" in 2009. We are talking about the "Insolvente Boedelskamer" or Chamber of Insolvent Estates. Immerse yourself in the history of this extraordinary funds and discover its contents.

The first part of this article deals with the history of the Chamber of Insolvent Estates, the second with its contents. Before we begin, let us take a brief look at the economic and legal context in which the records were created.

Deeds, writings, and other documents are illustrations of the times in which they were created. To get a full picture of the records and registers of the Chamber of Insolvent Estates, it is important to first consider how and why they were created. This is followed by a brief discussion of Antwerp's role as a trading city. We will then examine the contemporary legal institutions.

The oldest documents in the business archives date from the sixteenth century, known as Antwerp's Golden Age. From 1490, Antwerp's economic growth started to accelerate in the following decades, making Antwerp the pre-eminent international trading centre. Merchants of English cloth, Portuguese spices and southern German metal products made Antwerp the hub of their trading activities. They were soon followed by Italian and Spanish merchants who found their way to the city on the Scheldt. Antwerp experienced growing prosperity and an unprecedented cultural flowering. Arts and crafts reached new heights and the trade in luxury goods (such as diamonds, lace, silk, glass, etc.) boomed. The city also proved to be the money market par excellence, and its role as a centre of knowledge for modern trading techniques such as maritime insurance, commission trading, double-entry accounting and credit trading through loans and bills of exchange should not be underestimated. By the mid sixteenth century, problems were looming in the form of religious conflicts and repression, military and political instability. All these factors combined led to the fall of Antwerp in 1585. Its direct link to the sea was severed and its role as a shipping, transit and storage site was compromised. But a light was shining in this economic darkness. Antwerp remained the home of several international companies, its role as a money market was maintained, and through the production and trade of luxury goods (diamond trade and art exports), Antwerp remained an important economic player on the international scene. It is only in the first half of the eighteenth century that we see a sharp decline, but there are still important developments related to trade: consignment, the use of fixed commercial terms and sample books, ordering and participation. We also mention the attempts at colonial trade and the development of banking in Antwerp.

Historically, Antwerp has been governed by two mayors (an inner and an outer mayor) and 12 aldermen (the number varies over time), assisted by a number of other officials. The main judicial institutions include the "Hoge Vierschaar" (literally: foursquare), the College or Council Chamber and the amman's Chamber with its civil justice functions.

The (Hoge) Vierschaar consists of the majority of the aldermen under the chairmanship of the (sub)bailiff. The public sessions of the Vierschaar take place on Fridays in the open air and are opened with a trumpet blast. This high court deals with serious criminal cases and its judgement is final.

For less serious offences, the College, or Council, was called upon. The College consisted of the mayor and several aldermen. The decisions of the College could be appealed. The proceedings of the College were recorded in the Clementyn Books and the Correction Books.

Civil justice was administered by the amman. Like the (sub-)bailiff, the amman was a ducal officer. The amman's Chamber is the seat or office of the amman. Let us take a closer look at the figure of the amman. It seems that he has a prominent role in the history of the Chamber of Insolvent Estates.

To qualify for the role of amman, one had to fulfil several conditions: one had to be of legal birth, a Brabander and a "poorter" (= official resident of the city) of Antwerp. The amman office was leased and sold to the highest bidder. The office therefore brought in a lot of money. The amman was entitled to the stall or guard fees collected during the markets, and all deeds of the amman were taxed.

The amman is the highest judicial official and employs a number of subordinate officials. Firstly, the amman can appeal to the bearer of the long rod (Lange Roede). He can summon the parties, arrest them, pronounce judgements and order them to be carried out. This function is also leased. Disobedience to the long rod is punished. In addition to the long rod, the amman can rely on the help of his clerk or secretary. The latter's task is to make an inventory of the possessions of the condemned. In the presence of witnesses, the clerk makes an inventory of the goods found in the accused's home. The clerk also keeps a record or account of the goods sold or executed. For the sale of convicts' goods, the amman can rely on the intervention of the former cloth buyers (oudkleerkopers) in his service. And the guarding of the goods at the convict's residence until the day of sale is the responsibility of the amman's servants ("knuivers" or "cluivers").

Every day the amman was expected to intervene in a certain council. The reports and decisions of these councils were recorded on rolls. Depending on the day or the nature of the case, the roll was given a name.

First, there was the Ordinaris roll. On Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays the amman discussed non-urgent civil matters in the presence of an alderman. Urgent civil matters were recorded on the extraordinary roll. The amman also met on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays with two or three aldermen. Later the Ordinaris and Extra-Ordinaris rolls were merged into the Grand Roll (Grote Rol).

On Mondays there was the Monday roll (Maandagse rol), where minor food offences were dealt with by the amman and an alderman. This left Wednesdays and Fridays (no work was done on Sundays). On the Wednesday roll (Woensdagse rol), tax matters, house rent matters and wage matters were dealt with

Table of the 'Vierschaar' (formerly preserved in the museum *Het Steen*), drawing by L. Titz (12#9735).

in the presence of the amman and two aldermen. The Wednesday and Monday roles were later combined into the Small Roll (Kleine rol). On Fridays the amman was expected at the meeting of the Vierschaar. The amman summoned the Vierschaar, kept order during the meeting and acted as herald.

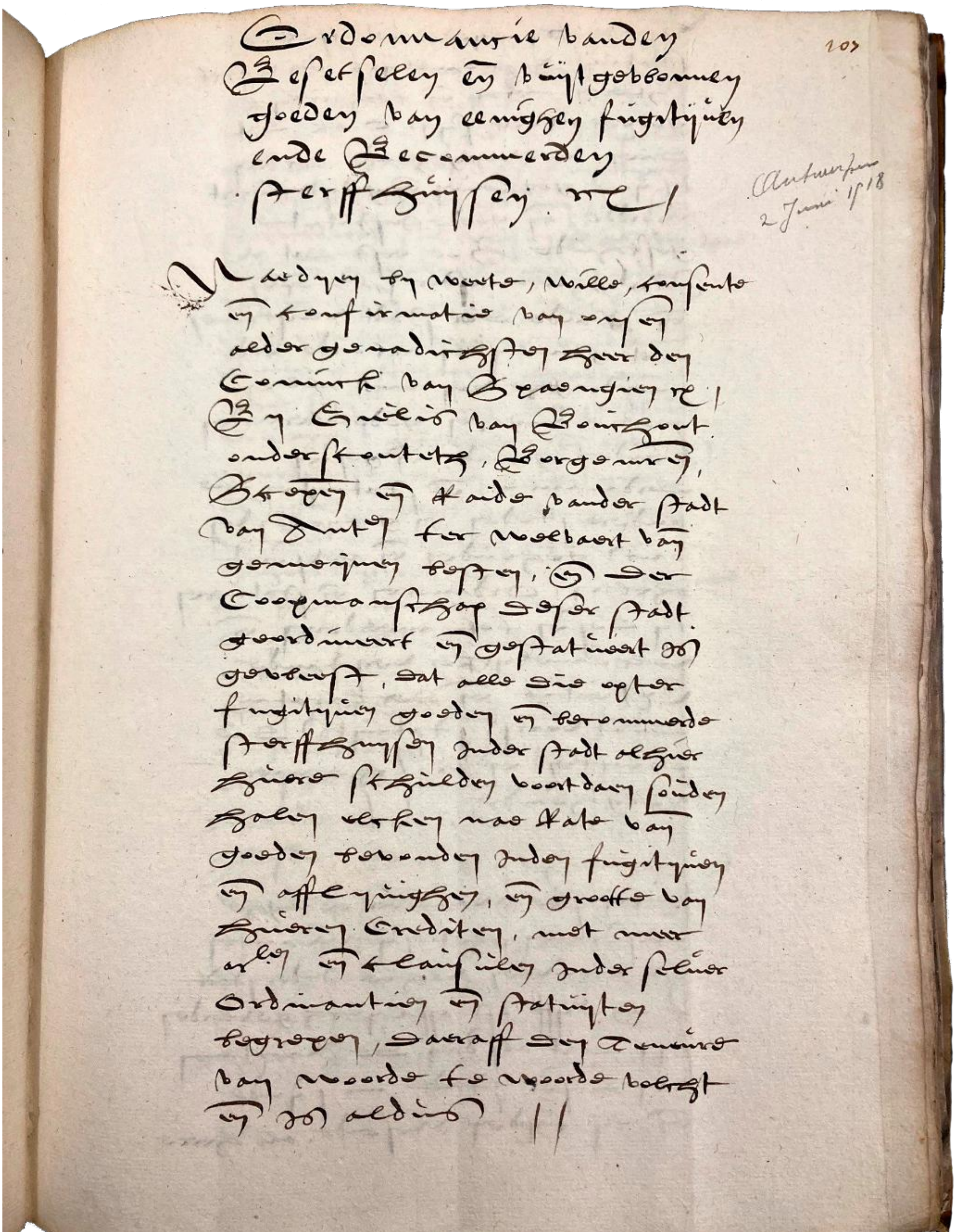
The amman is an important figure in the history of the Chamber of Insolvent Estates. To understand his role, we need to go back to 1582, when the printed "Rechten en costumen van Antwerpen" (The rights and costumes of Antwerp) assigned the amman a specific role in the section on "Preference of creditors". In this section it is stated that when someone goes bankrupt, the amman, by virtue of his office and the ordinance of 2 June 1518, and only at the request of the creditors, without any further judgement or special order, must make an inventory of all the movable and immovable properties belonging to the bankrupt. Two aldermen had to be present. In a later section of the ordinance on "fugitives and insolvent persons", this was repeated, and it was also stated that the amman as "ordinaris sequester" was to hold all the movable and immovable properties of the fugitive and/or bankrupt, to be sold or distributed to compensate the creditors. If one of the creditors was appointed trustee, the amman's responsibility ceased. After 1582, other decrees and regulations were implemented regarding those who were insolvent, but the foundation was laid in 1518. Does the appointment of the amman as trustee in bankruptcy mark the beginning of the creation of a chamber of insolvent estates? This question can only be answered by looking at the Chamber of Insolvent Estates itself.

From Chamber of Insolvent Estates...

The term Chamber of Insolvent Estates appears for the first time in 1926-1927. In the journal "Antwerps Archievenblad", published by the city archives, the then city archivist Jan Denucé published the article: "The Chamber of Insolvent Estates as the nucleus for an Antwerp economic archive, with inventory". Why this sudden interest in business archives? Well, at the end of the nineteenth century, historians and economists became more and more interested in historical economic archives. The *Annales* school played an important role in this. Whereas in the past the focus was on the historiography of elites and on political history, the Annales school wants to describe an all-encompassing view of the world. They want to write a long-term history in which historical patterns can be discovered. Humanities such as sociology, economics and geography can help.

Long neglected trade registers, letters and related archives are coming into focus, and there are several initiatives abroad to bring these documents together. Through these sources it is possible to trace the internal organisation of trade in the past. It gives an insight into the trading techniques used and their evolution.

For Antwerp, Denucé sees the Chamber of Insolvent Estates as the core of this historical-economic archive. It is likely that he was inspired by G. Moll's publication on the "Desolate Boedelskamer of Amsterdam" (1879). This Amsterdam Chamber of Insolvent Estates is an institution that existed as a physical chamber and as a creator of archives. Insolvent or desolate estates meant all bequeathed papers, goods of bankrupt merchants or bankrupts. But, as Denucé immediately adds, the Antwerp Chamber of Insolvent Estates also deposited numerous archives of the most honourable Antwerp families. This marginal note is of great importance. Denucé locates the origin of the Chamber of Insolvent Estates in 1518, in the ordinance quoted above. From 1518 onwards, the amman was responsible for listing and administering insolvent estates. Once all the valuable goods had been sold, all that remained was that which had no immediate value. This included all the bankrupt merchant's business papers and registers. By analogy with existing chambers in the town hall, such as the Orphans' Room (Weeskamer) and the Privileges Room (Privilege Kamer), Denucé envisaged the creation of a separate chamber in which insolvent estates would be kept. Or did he mean it more symbolically, interpreting the chamber as the office or seat of the insolvent estates, an archival body with origins in the sixteenth century? Writing the history of the Chamber of Insolvent Estates would answer such questions, but alas. Neither Denucé nor his successors ventured into historiography. In the introduction to the article of 1926-1927, our city archivist said "it is of course not our intention to trace the development of the Antwerp Chamber of Insolvent Estates" and in another article "l'histoire juridique de cet organisme est encore à faire". A history of the Chamber of Insolvent Estates was never to be written. However, the existence of the Chamber of Insolvent Estates was not questioned until one hundred years later. If Denucé and his followers do not provide a history of the chamber, can it be written? What do we know for certain, and what sources are available to record the history of the Chamber of Insolvent Estates?


Ordonnancie vanden
besetselen en buytgeboonen
goeden van eenighen fugityven
ende becommerden
sterffhuysen. etc. 107

Antwerpen
2 Junii 1518

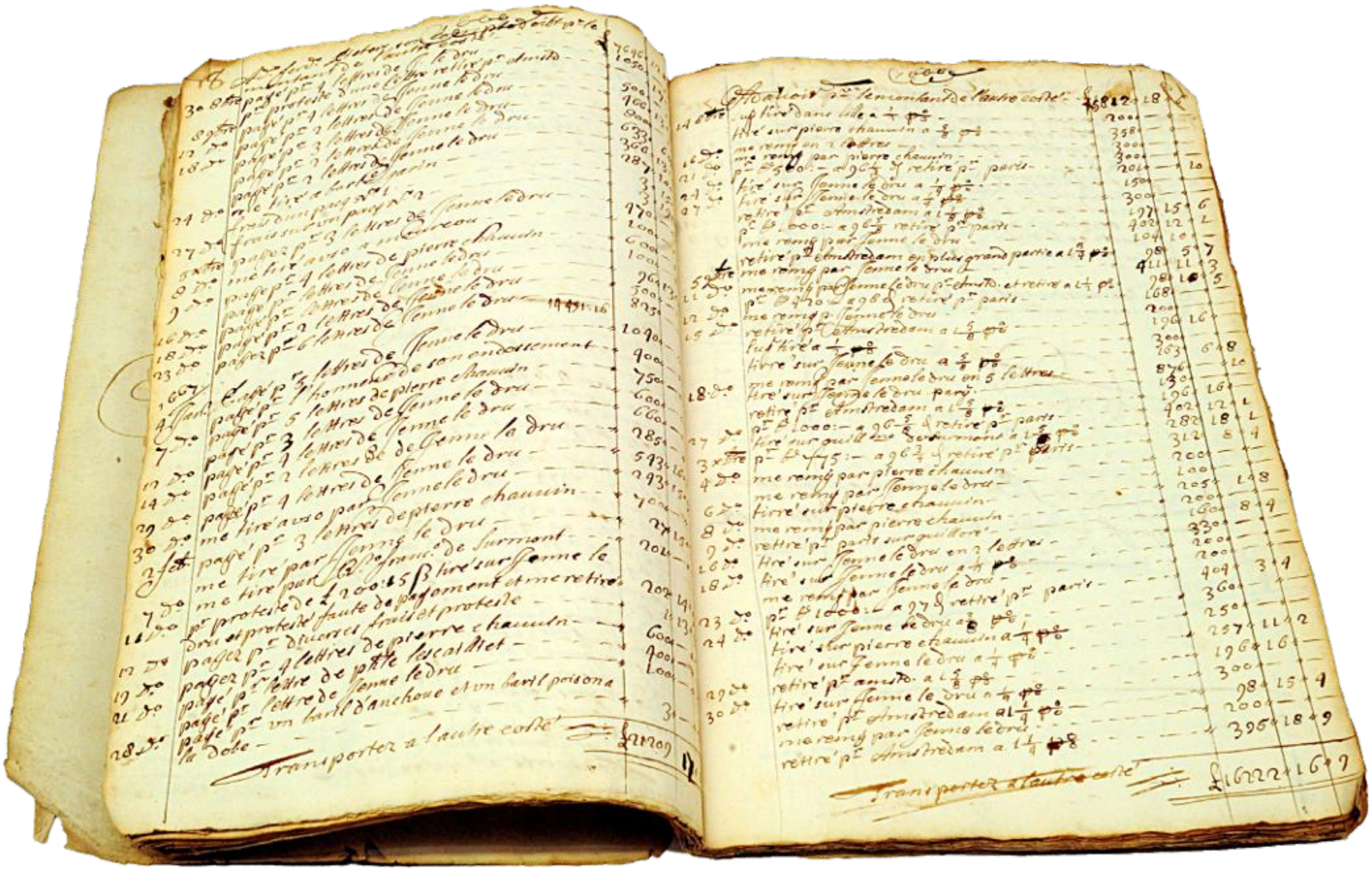
Naedyen by weten, wille, consente
en confirmatie van onsen
alder genadichsten heere den
Coninck van Spaengien etc.
En Hertoge van Bourgont.
onderstaende, Borgemeesteren,
Scepenen en Raide deser stadt
van Antwerpen ter welvaert van
gemeynen besten, en der
Coopmanschap deser stadt
geordineert en gestatueert es
geweest, dat alle die opter
fugityven goeden en becommerde
sterffhuysen inder stadt alhier
hiere schulden voortaen souden
halen elcken nae state van
goeden bevonden inden fugityven
en afflyvicheyt, en groote van
hieren crediten, met meer
articulen en clausulen inder selver
Ordinancien en statuyten
begrepen, daeraff den tenuere
van woorde te woorde volcht
en es aldus //

Ordinance of 2 June 1518 confirming the role of the *amman* in bankruptcies (V#5).

Let us first return to the legislation cited above, which, from 1518, appointed the amman to deal with debt cases. A case for the amman begins with the determination that an interest, recorded in an alderman's letter, can no longer be paid. The creditor brings this letter to the amman, who presents the case to the aldermen. The procedure is set in motion: the amman's letters are sent to the debtor, reminding him to go to the amman on the Tuesday after the amman's letter arrives. If the debtor does not comply after receiving a second letter from the amman, the amman has the right to sell the goods at the Friday market. The sale of the goods is called for three consecutive Fridays, on the fourth Friday the sale takes place. Before the sale, an inventory is registered of all the debtor's merchandise and the goods are kept on site until the day of the sale. We do not know what happened to the goods that were not sold. There is no text or explanation about it. There is no way of determining the procedure for taking into custody insolvent estates. With this, the first trace of further information on the Chamber of Insolvent Estates has run aground.

What is certain is that the estates of bankrupt merchants ended up in the town hall (at that time the repository of the City Archives). The conditions in which they were kept, their classification and, above all, their inventory, suggest that for a long time little attention was paid to these estates. Let us take a closer look at them. During the Ancien Regime, the focus was on the privileges and charters of the city. This is not illogical, as they still have an administrative value and a symbolic function. We find this focus in the oldest "general" inventory, drawn up by Hendrik de Moy (1534-1610). Instead of a complete overview of the records available, we get an inventory of privileges and a summary of the legislation in force. De Moy's followers (A. Van Valckenisse, Van der Neesen and Ph. Van Valckenisse) also compiled inventories, but with the same focus as de Moy. The French Revolution and the establishment of the French regime in the Netherlands also revolutionised the archival material. The abolition of the institutions of the Ancien Regime meant that the surviving records no longer had any administrative value. During the French period, it was Simon Pierre Dargonne (1749-1839), commissioner of the executive directorate of the city of Antwerp, who sealed the archives of the custodian of the charters and privileges, only to hand them over months later to a new institution: the archivist. Frans Lenaerts, Antwerp's first archivist, did not bring any innovations to the way the existing archives were looked at. His focus, and that of his successor Edward Marshall, remained on the deeds. This is not surprising.

The office of archivist is created during the French period, but no clear job description is specified. The arrival of an archivist did not mean that there was a separate building for the keeping of archival records. Traditionally, they were kept in various rooms in the town hall, where each old institution had its own room. We think of the Privilege Room (Privilege Kamer), the Orphanage Room (Weeskamer), the Court of Auditors (Rekenkamer). There is no reference at all to a Chamber of Insolvent Estates. After the collapse of the institutions of the Ancien Régime, little changed in terms of their repositories. Documents and registers were removed from the various chambers and stored together in two archive rooms in the town hall. With the threat of the Belgian Revolution in 1830-1831, the archives were moved to the basement of the town hall. It was Frederik Verachter who, after his appointment as archivist in 1833, together with two "pompiers" (firemen), retrieved the archives from the basement and immediately decided that a third archive room was needed. The tender for this third room was launched in 1835. Verachter was expected to make a thorough and complete inventory of the archives, because in 1834 the government ordered inventories for the state archives. Several city archives joined this movement, but Antwerp lagged behind. In 1860, spurred on by the many complaints, Verachter published his «Inventaire des anciens chartres et privilèges conservés aux Archives de la ville d'Anvers (1193-1856)». Like his predecessors, he focused on the town's charters and privileges. In his unpublished "inventaire sommaire", Verachter lists the documents in each room. In room three, he identifies the "Consignment Chamber" (Consignatie kamer) and the "Old Consignments" under the City Treasury Chamber. It has been proven that consignments can lead to the creation of important archives. Nor does it seem far-fetched to assume that there are similarities between this



Commercial documents from the de Lannoy archive (17th century), (IB#1867).

Consignment Chamber and the Insolvent Estate Chamber. Again, the word "chamber" should not be taken literally. On the contrary, Verachter suggests that these consignments should be located in the city's City Treasury Chamber (Stadsrekenkamer). An extensive investigation in 2011 into the link between the Consignment Chamber and the Chamber of Insolvent Estates concluded that some of the 51 names mentioned in the old consignments also appeared in the Chamber of Insolvent Estates, but to say that Verachter's Consignment Chamber and Denucé's Chamber of Insolvent Estates are the same is a bridge too far.

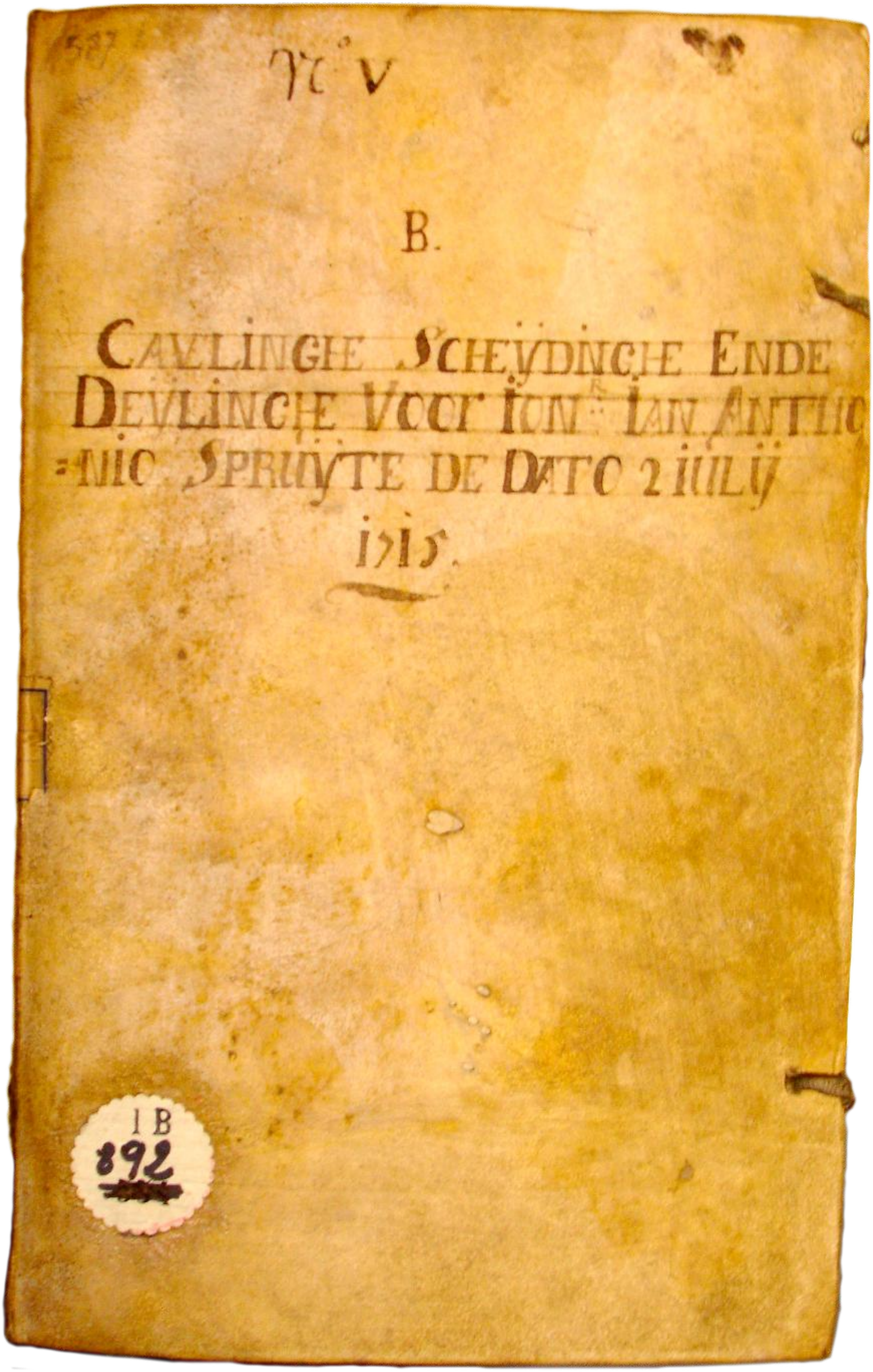
Verachter's successor, Pieter Génard, breathed new life into the Antwerp City Archives. His staff was increased to six, a general inventory was published and the "Antwerps Archievenblad" was launched. New archive rooms were also set up in the town hall. A new, concise inventory was drawn up, which served as the basis for a new arrangement of the archives in the available premises. But once again there was no trace of the Chamber of Insolvent Estates. It was not until 1899 that insolvent estates were mentioned for the first time. In the publication "Verslag over het bestuur en den zakentoestand der stads Antwerpen, dienstjaar 1899" (Report on the administration and business situation of the city of Antwerp, financial year 1899) we can read that "since the summer of 1899, the reading of the large quantity of unopened papers of the insolvent estates of the seventeenth century has begun, containing many business and family letters, which are being sorted out and collected in several bundles". In 1899, Frans Van den Branden was the city archivist. Under his direction, the never-opened bequests were put together in bundles. These bundles of correspondence and accounts, together with the registers, were placed on shelves and numbered in blue pencil. These "blue numbers" would also be kept by Denucé and would remain in use until 1947. Denucé was the first to publish about the Chamber of Insolvent Estates and its contents. However, it was Jos Velle who created a basic index of the volumes collected by Van den Branden. The register, which unfortunately has not survived, would allocate one page to each estate. On this page, Velle would then note the blue numbers of the registers and bundles for each estate. It was on the base of this register that Denucé began his publication on the insolvent estates in the Antwerps Archievenblad. Neither Velle nor Denucé took the time to search the entire archive thoroughly. They relied on what was already on the shelves. As a result, the inventory lacks a well-thought-out structure, and large parts of the estates are overlooked. In 1947, under Frans Blockmans, the collection was renumbered. The registers and volumes overlooked by Denucé were added and everything was completely renumbered. A final renumbering took place between 1984 and 1990 under archivist Jozef Van den Nieuwenhuizen. Under his direction, the structure of the collection was changed. As the piles of correspondence were too large and difficult to consult, the letters were separated from the other documents, arranged alphabetically and then grouped according to the addressee. The same procedure was followed for the invoices and other loose documents. Due to the unexpected retirement of this archivist, the work was interrupted to be resumed by the next municipal archivist, Inge Schoups.

…to "trading companies gathered in the Chamber of Insolvent Estates"

In the previous section, we examined what we know for certain about the Chamber of Insolvent Estates, which Denucé claims was created in 1518. In the sources of the Ancien Regime, there is no trace of this Chamber of Insolvent Estates. It is only in 1926-1927 that the term appears for the first time. Speaking of insolvent estates has a limiting effect, because insolvent means bankruptcy, financial insolvency. Denucé himself makes this comment in his introduction, stating that there are also archives of prominent Antwerp companies and families. In the introduction to his 1998 inventory, J. Van Den Nieuwenhuizen also points out that the term "insolvent estates" is misleading. Until 2011, no researcher or author had devoted himself to the history of the Chamber of Insolvent Estates. E. Doesselaere, however, has changed all that. In her study, she examines whether the term "Insolvent Chamber of Insolvent Estates" can rightly be attributed to the funds of business archives preserved. She searches for the roots of the "chamber", but despite numerous searches in various source materials, old and more recent inventories, studies and publications, she finds no mention of the Insolvent Chamber of Insolvent Estates before 1926-1927.

Her research should be seen as an attempt to write the history of the Chamber of Insolvent Estates, but since this municipal institution or chamber cannot be found in any contemporary source, there is nothing to write about it. Only this: the Chamber of Insolvent Estates did not exist as a separate chamber in the town hall or as an archival institution. The term was first used by Jan Denucé in 1926-1927. Influenced by the innovative outlook and ideas of the Annales school, and perhaps inspired by G. Moll's work on a Boedelskamer in Amsterdam, Denucé started to properly describe the rich collection of business archives he found in the Antwerp City Archives. Some of his predecessors had opened the archives and roughly filed them. In order to emphasise the importance of these business archives, Denucé came up with the idea of a real "chamber", making it seem as if the collection had grown organically within this archival institution. This is not true. The collection of business archives, the assembling of them, is an artificial construction undertaken to present the business archives as a whole, to underline their importance, to show that there is a continuity over the centuries. The archivist, who determines the location of the archive within an archival structure and the description of the records, bears a great responsibility.

Arranging and describing archives is not innocent and from the moment of description and arranging it determines how the archive is seen from then on. Denucé did the same for the archives gathered in the Chamber of Insolvent Estates. After E. Doesselaere's extensive research, the Antwerp city archives decided to refer to these archives as the "trading companies gathered in the Chamber of Insolvent Estates".



‘Cavlinghe scheijdinghe ende deylinghe voor ionker Ian Anthonio Spruijte de dato 2 iulij 1715’ (Divorce and division for jonker Ian Anthonio Spruijte dated 2 July 1715), (IB#892).

Leather bookbinding with gold lettering of the Italian ledger of the Affaitadi family (31 May 1556 – 5 December 1558), (IB#1580).

How did commercial records end up in the city archives?

The origins of the City Archives collection from the earliest period are unclear. There are no contemporary records to indicate how records came to be housed in the City Archives. There is no mention of any register or other method of registration. If we focus specifically on the provenance of the business archives in our collection, the following factors play a role in the formation of the collection. Due to the legislation of the time, many business archives of bankrupt merchants were transferred via the amman to the town hall/city archive. Examples of this include Balthazar Andrea, the van Immerseel family and Gerard Gramaye. There are also estates that end up in the archives because the leading figure in the trading company had passed away. This was the case with the Van der Schelstraten family, Antoni Dom and the Reyns sisters. The departure of the trading company from Antwerp is also a factor that we recognise. With the Fall of Antwerp in 1585 and the Treaty of Münster (1648), many religious, social, economic and cultural changes took place. Merchants felt targeted and left Antwerp. Many of them moved to the Netherlands and Germany.

The merchants' archives they left behind became part of the city's archives. The archives of the de Weer-Tholincx company and the Van Cantelbeek family are examples of this. A special case is the estate of Hendrik Bertels. He was accused of manslaughter and, in order to escape punishment, left everything behind and went to the East Indies. In her study of Charles de Proli, H. Houtman-Desmet mentions another interesting point. Most of the strong merchant lineages in Antwerp are intertwined through family ties. We know that merchant families were strongly represented in the civil service of the city of Antwerp. Wouldn't it be possible that these ties to the city ensured that their business archives ended up with the city? When the archives of their office as city officials ended up in the city archives, the business archives went with them. The tendency for archives to be donated is also important for the development of the collection. We know for certain that some of the merchant estates were donated to the City Archives. In 1879, for example, Mr Van Cutsem, former President of the Court, donated part of the archives of the Le Candele family. In 1884, Baron Lunden donated a large number of business archives from the seventeenth century. This donation only mentions the type of archives involved (journals, general ledgers, invoice books, loose bundles, etc.), but does not specify which trading companies were involved. In addition, in 1921 Mr D.J. de Pret Roose de Calesberg and after 1936 the Moretus family donated archives from related families, certainly the Boon and de Pret families. And in 1925, C. Smekens donated the archives of Charles de Proli. Finally, archives were also acquired through purchase and exchange. These include four registers from the Affaytadi family archives. The four registers were exhibited at the World Fair in 1930. They belonged to the State Archives. Denucé worked hard to integrate these four registers into the already existing business archives of the Affaytadi family. And with success. The four beautifully decorated registers have since become part of the Antwerp collection.

Contents of the archive funds

The previous text examined the provenance of the business archives kept in the FelixArchief. Now we turn to their contents. Let us take a look at the merchants and merchant families and their goods. The preserved trade archives cover several centuries. This makes them extremely interesting sources for the investigation of trade trends and qualifies them as study material for social and mental history. Finally, it is also interesting to take a closer look at the physical contents of the estates.

Four centuries of trends in trade

The funds contain the archives of 153 merchants and merchant families. Of these 153, we know the owners of 148 of them, and we do not know the owners of five. The estates date from the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Looking at the chronological distribution, we notice the following:

Century	Number of merchants
XVI	10
XVI-XVII	13
XVII	45
XVII-XVIII	45
XVIII	48
XVIII-XIX	3
XVI-XVIII	4
XVII-XIX	2
Undated	3

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are particularly well represented. The sixteenth-eighteenth and seventeenth-nineteenth centuries are exceptional and provide a good basis for in-depth research into changing economic trends over the centuries.

Different trends in trade can be identified in the successive centuries. Antwerp's trade boom in the sixteenth century is due to the city's position as a hub for international trade. In Antwerp we find large groups of foreign merchants: Italians, Spaniards, Germans, English and Portuguese. The emphasis was on trade in spices and foods, linen and metals. Antwerp served as a warehouse and transit hub for goods. Even more important, however, is its role as a collection and distribution centre for modern trading technology. The various groups of merchants brought not only their merchandise, but also their knowledge and innovative trading techniques. The sixteenth century saw the rise of maritime insurance, commission trading, double-entry accounting, factoring, transport companies and the formation of partnerships.

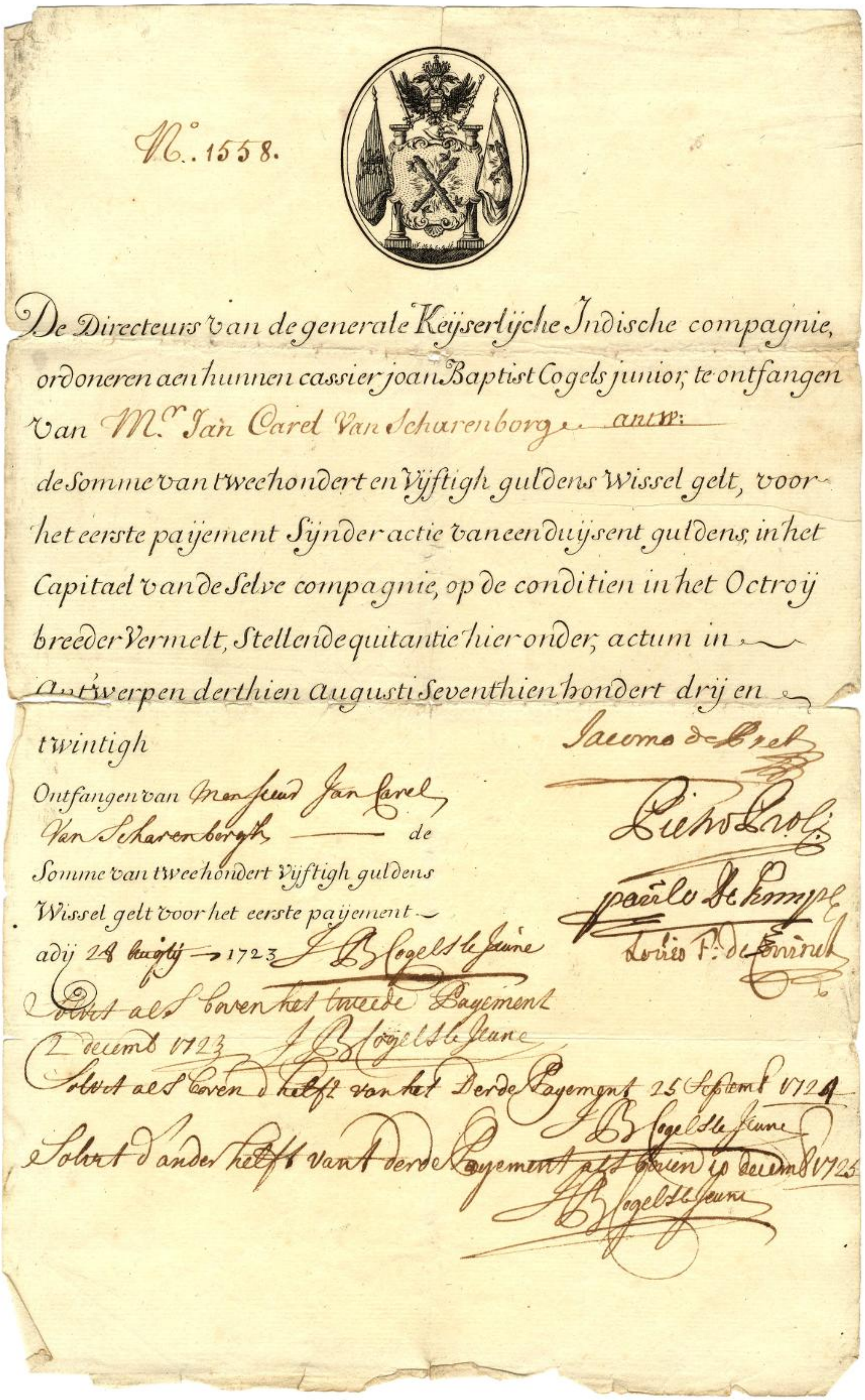
New industries emerged: glassblowing, silk manufacture, diamond processing and majolica production. In addition, interest rates fell, and credit sales became the rule. Merchants of modest means are given the opportunity to participate in international trade, with the chance of (large) profits. A powerful group of merchants emerged in Antwerp, with a strong influence on Antwerp's trade and on the politics of Antwerp and Brabant. The Fall of Antwerp in 1585 marked a turning point in Antwerp's dynamism. The trading activities of many merchants shifted abroad. But there was no radical break. Business life in Antwerp continued in the seventeenth century, but with the necessary shifts. The trade in luxury goods and works of art kept Antwerp afloat. These included diamonds, lace, silk, refined sugar, fine furniture, and paintings. Antwerp is home to many internationally renowned artists. Its role as a financial centre also remains important: it acts as an intermediary in credit and exchange transactions between the Protestant north and the Catholic south. The number of "foreign" merchants has declined, but the remaining merchants are quite wealthy and come from families that have lived in Antwerp for several generations. Their activities are not restricted to trade only; they are also bankers, shipowners, insurers, and brokers. In order to strengthen the ties with their country of origin, family members (often sons) are sent to the south for an apprenticing period.

This gave Antwerp's business life a broad base. Antwerp merchants participated in the colonial trade through the Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch trading companies, with which close contacts were maintained. Own overseas ventures remained out.

The first half of the eighteenth century brought a change in this trend. Attempts were made to establish direct colonial trade with the East Indies and China. These included the establishment of the Ostend Company and later the Asian Company of Trieste. Although the first attempts were successful, the competition from the Netherlands and England became too great. In the 18th century, Antwerp was still successful in trading diamonds, books and silk, but the trade in luxury goods such as carpets, paintings and fine furniture was in decline. Wealth was more likely to be tied up in tenements, land holdings, annuities and bonds. The wealthy class entrenched themselves in luxuriously furnished patrician homes and "courts of plaisance". They invested in local modernised industries: timber sawmills, cotton printing, stationery, yarn bleaching. There was also a development in the organisation of trade: consignment, the use of fixed terms and sample cards, orders and participation. The development of the banking system in Antwerp is very important. There are no general banks; banking operations are in the hands of private bankers and cashiers.

All these commercial trends and tendencies can be found in the business archives kept in the FelixArchief. Because these archives are so widely spread over time, it is possible to study the evolution of trading techniques and practices. In the past, several researchers have studied the archives and published their conclusions. Much information has been gathered about the families and merchants from whom these archives came. We would like to give you a brief introduction to some of these merchants and their surviving archives, as to illustrate that outlined above were used by them.

The first person we would like to introduce is Frans de Pape, a cloth merchant and member of one of the seven oldest patrician families in Antwerp dating back to the sixteenth century. Frans was also in charge of collecting the wine excise duty. There is a tendency for merchants to be incorporated into the civil service, and this may be one reason why the merchants' archives, in addition to the office archives, ended up in the city archives. In the case of Frans de Pape, the circumstances are somewhat different. In addition to being a linen merchant, Frans also traded in hops, spices, hides, grain, wheat and cattle, the typical sixteenth century products. Unfortunately, Frans was not successful. He got into trouble, ran up debts, the amman was called in and the business papers ended up first in the consignment room and later in the insolvent estate fund.



No. 1558.

De Directeurs van de generale Keijserlijche Indische compagnie, ordoneren aen hunnen cassier joan Baptist Cogels junior, te ontfangen van Mr. Jan Carel Van Scharenborge antw:

de Somme van tweehondert en Vijftigh guldens Wissel gelt, voor het eerste paijement Sijnder actie van een duijsent guldens, in het Capitael van de Selve compagnie, op de conditien in het Octroij breeder Vermelt, Stellende quitantie hier onder, actum in Antwerpen derthien augusti Seventhien hondert drij en twintigh

Iacomo de Pret
Pietro Proli
paulo De Kimpe
Louis F. de Coninck

Ontfangen van Monsieur Jan Carel Van Scharenbergh de Somme van tweehondert Vijftigh guldens Wissel gelt voor het eerste paijement adij 28 augustij 1723 J B Cogels le jeune

Solvit als boven het tweede Payement 2 decemb 1723 J B Cogels le jeune

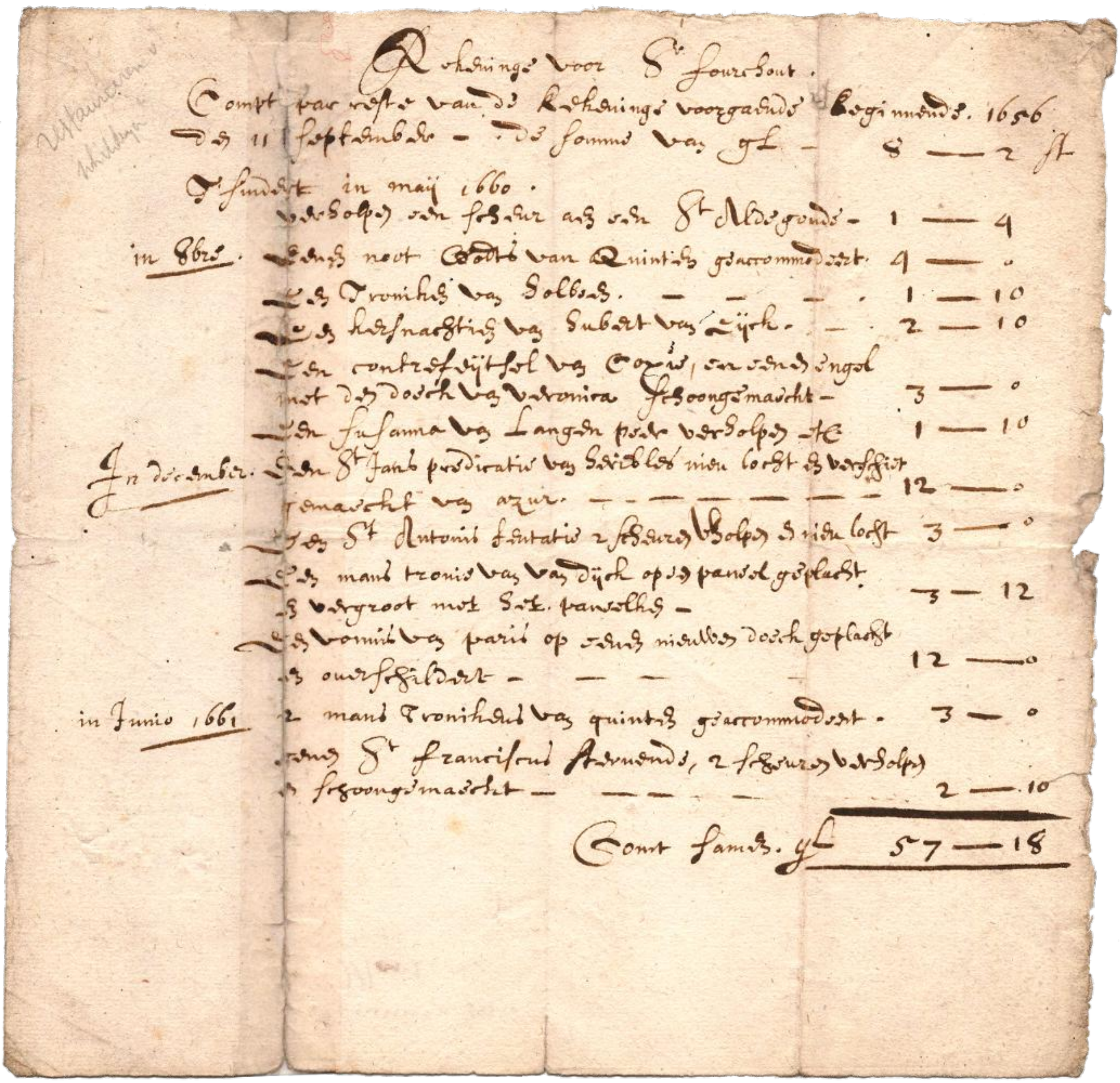
Solvit als boven d helft van het Derde Payement 25 Septemb 1724 J B Cogels le jeune

Solvit d ander helft vant derde Payement als boven 10 decemb 1725 J B Cogels le jeune

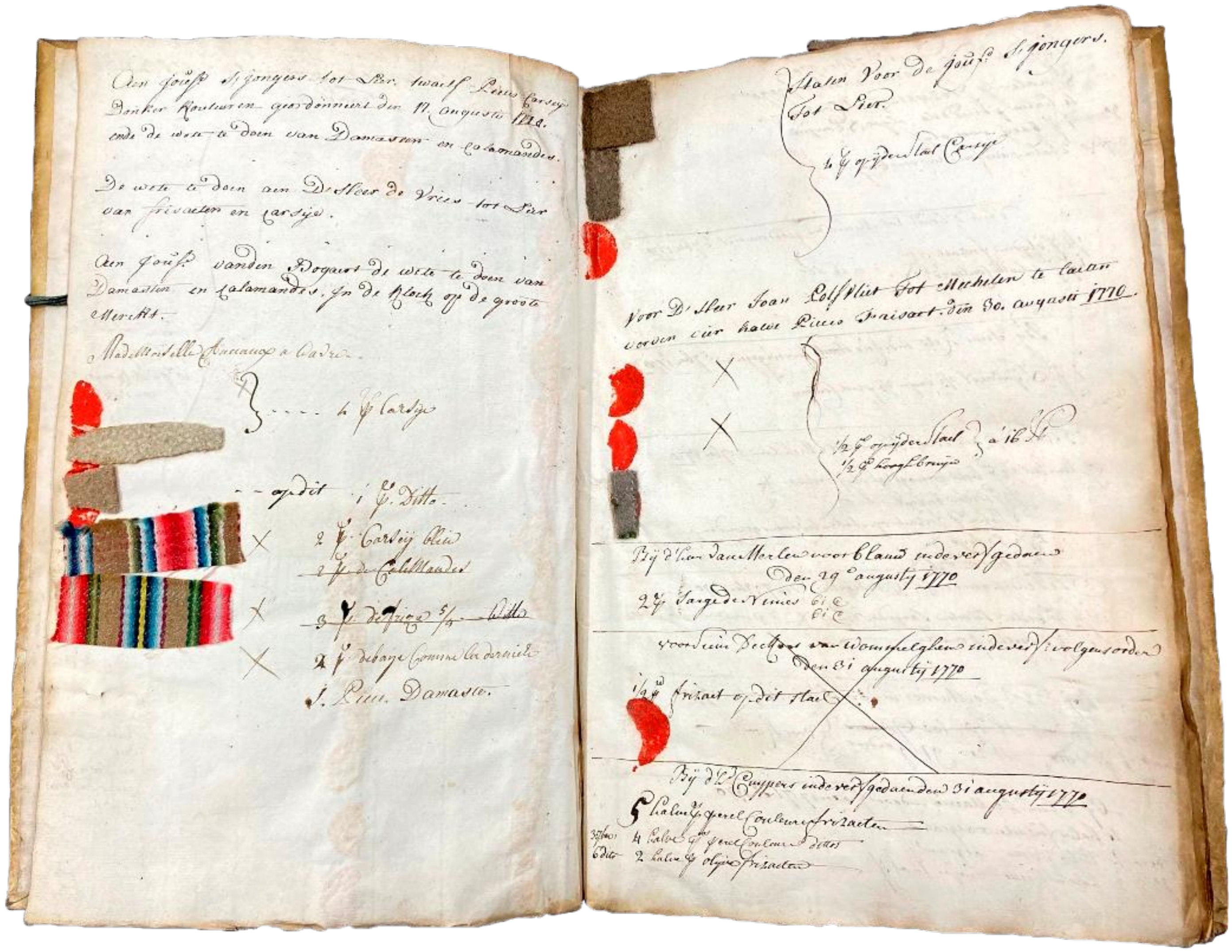
Share number 1558 of the Imperial General East India Company in the name of Jan Carel van Scharenborge (13 August 1723), (IB#2455).

A particularly rich source for the study of maritime insurance is the estate of Juan Henriquez. His two ledgers date from 1562-1563, the heyday of the Antwerp trade, and are the oldest part of the insolvent estate. In addition to trading in merchandise (grain and cloth), Henriquez was also involved in maritime insurance: insuring ships' cargoes during the voyage from one country to another. We learn from the ledgers that Juan Henriquez had contacts with all the important merchants of his time, both nationally and internationally. It is difficult to say how these two books ended up in the archives, but it is likely that the early death of J. Henriquez played a role.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the De Weer-Tholincx company from 's Hertogenbosch settled in Antwerp. They started out as cloth merchants and, despite the difficult conditions of foreign trade from 1648, their business expanded steadily. They started trading in silk and linseed and dyeing cloth. They


Rekeninge voor Sr Forchondt.
in maij 1660.
in 8bre.
In decembr.
in Junio 1661
Comt samen gl 57 — 18

Invoices for paintings and frames from the Forchondt trading archive (1656-1661), (IB#1103).



Sample book of the De Wolf company (18th century), (IB#2297).

also engaged in monetary operations and the sale of interests. The members of the firm were therefore both merchants and bankers. Trading records continue until 1664, when the firm probably withdrew to the Netherlands when it became apparent that trading conditions in Antwerp were not improving.

One of the most important trading companies of the last decades of the sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth century was the Van Immerseel family. This family had strong Spanish connections and traded in luxury goods: silk, linen, carpets, lace, leather, books and paintings. The letters written by Jan van Immerseel from occupied Antwerp to his wife in Dordrecht in 1585 are remarkable. The family had trading contacts as far afield as the East Indies, Mexico and Russia. Their son Chrysostomus also entered the service of the Spanish crown and was entrusted with several diplomatic missions. Unfortunately, the dynamic did not last. Chrysostomos was briefly imprisoned for mismanagement of the company's funds and subsequent lawsuits. His noble title helped him get out of prison. Nevertheless, the difficulties continued until his death.

Antwerp's diamond trade helped to keep the city on the economic map. In the insolvent archive fund we find a lot of archive material from Antwerp diamond merchants. The de Groote-Herincx family, the Boon family and also the Reyns sisters come to mind, although the latter are best known for their lace trade, another pillar of Antwerp's economy. This is typical of the merchants whose estates are preserved. They traded in a combination of luxury goods. The sisters Anna Philippina and Isabella Regina Reyns took over their parents' lace business and

Letter from A. Comijn to James Dormer from Nieuwpoort (6 February 1744), (IB#1667).

made it flourish. They were an exception in the world of commerce. Two young women running an international business. Over the years, a number of partnerships were formed, but the driving forces behind it all were the two sisters. Both died without descendants and their business documents ended up in the city archives.

The Forchondt family (spellings vary: Forchoudt, Forckhondt) belongs to the same category of merchants who trade in various luxury products. In this case, art objects and diamonds. This family of German origin settled in Antwerp in 1603, where the patriarch Melchior manufactured fine furniture. His son, Guillaume, followed in his father's footsteps, specialising in precious cabinets made of expensive woods such as ebony and rosewood, richly inlaid with gold and ivory, beautifully painted and covered with rich fabrics. As well as furniture, Guilliam also creates paintings and tapestries. The art trade did not bring in enough money, so they also traded in diamonds, pearls and jewellery. Guilliam's sons and daughters also joined the family business. Several of them moved abroad, where they set up offices to look after the family business. In Vienna, Alexander and Guilliam junior (Guillielmo) became court jewellers to the emperor, and in Cádiz we find Justo, who later returned to Antwerp and purchased the Eksterlaar estate in Deurne.

In the early eighteenth century, people sailed to the colonies in India and China. Of course, there was colonial trade before the eighteenth century, but it was always through the intervention of Spanish, Portuguese, Italian and English nations. The trading company "Solvijns, De Wolf and Company", a partnership between the company Solvijns and the city treasurer Jan Baptist De Wolf, is one example. Most of Antwerps merchants were sharehold-

Advertising material for a precious stone 'An extra-large beautiful green stone for sale weighing 560 *grijn*' (IB#2449).

ers in this company. "Solvijns, De Wolf and Company" is a large trading and shipping company that outfits its own ships. After it was discovered that De Wolf had invested city money in his private company and lost it, the tide turned. The company was declared bankrupt.

The Meyers-Van de Werve family was one of the last trading companies interested in Spanish colonial trade. It had shares in the Asian Company of Trieste and Fiume, founded in the second half of the eighteenth century and largely financed with Antwerp capital. Along with the Trieste and Fiume Company, another important name in our business archives is that of Charles de Proli. A successful child of his time, de Proli was an important Antwerp banker of international standing, as well as an industrialist. De Proli was involved in several important eighteenth-century companies. These included the Asian Trieste and Fiume Company and later the Imperial Indian Company. The Asian Company was not very successful in the colonial trade, but it made its fortune in sugar refining with the establishment of a sugar refinery in Trieste. As well as the Proli, the well-known Antwerp printer family Moretus also invested large sums of money in the Asian Company. In 1781, the Imperial Indian Company was founded, and we see that Charles de Proli became its director a year later. As we have said, de Proli had a hand in many things. He also had a hand in James Dormer's insurance chamber.

Originally from the county of Southampton (UK), Dormer (1708-1758) joined the English merchant house of Porter in Bruges after his studies. After being introduced to Antwerp's De Pret and de Proli, James took on the task of travelling to Canton (China). On his return to Antwerp, James Dormer was highly praised by prominent Antwerp merchants. He settled in the city on the Scheldt, where he married twice and where his career continued to develop. In addition to trading in diamonds (as well as porcelain, art objects, tea, tobacco, sugar, barley, hides, wool and linseed) and precious stones, Dormer is best known as a banker. His greatest achievement was the establishment of the "Keizerlijke en Koninklijke Verzekeringskamer" (the Imperial and Royal Insurance Room) in Antwerp in 1754, in which Charles de Proli also participated. Dormer's early death in 1758 took the wind right out of the sails of this successful enterprise. James's son continued his father's business, but he seemed to lack his father's business spirit and talent.

In the previous section we introduced another important Antwerp merchant family: the de Pret family, of which Philip Louis, Jacomo and Arnold were the most significant members. They traded in diamonds (and other luxury goods) and their shareholdings in colonial trading companies made them a notorious name in the world of international trade.

The above account may illustrate the intense interdependence of the Antwerp merchant families. This strong networking is at the root of the families' great success, both in trade and on the political (city) stage. Not only for merchants, but


Dentelles Blanches De flandres
Finnes
6 caissettes de 40 P.es chasqune, larges despuis
2 doits jusques a Vn Pan, chasque Piesce
De la longueur de 24 aus= Du Plus beau
Patron possibles & cecelles quon apelle
filagrane, le Prix est sellon la
sortiment et bonte', les Vnnes portant
les aultres despuis mille Reis jusques
a 550 r- Peu plus ou moings sellon
la bonte' et Largeur-

ce sont les dentelles quon
apelle filagranne

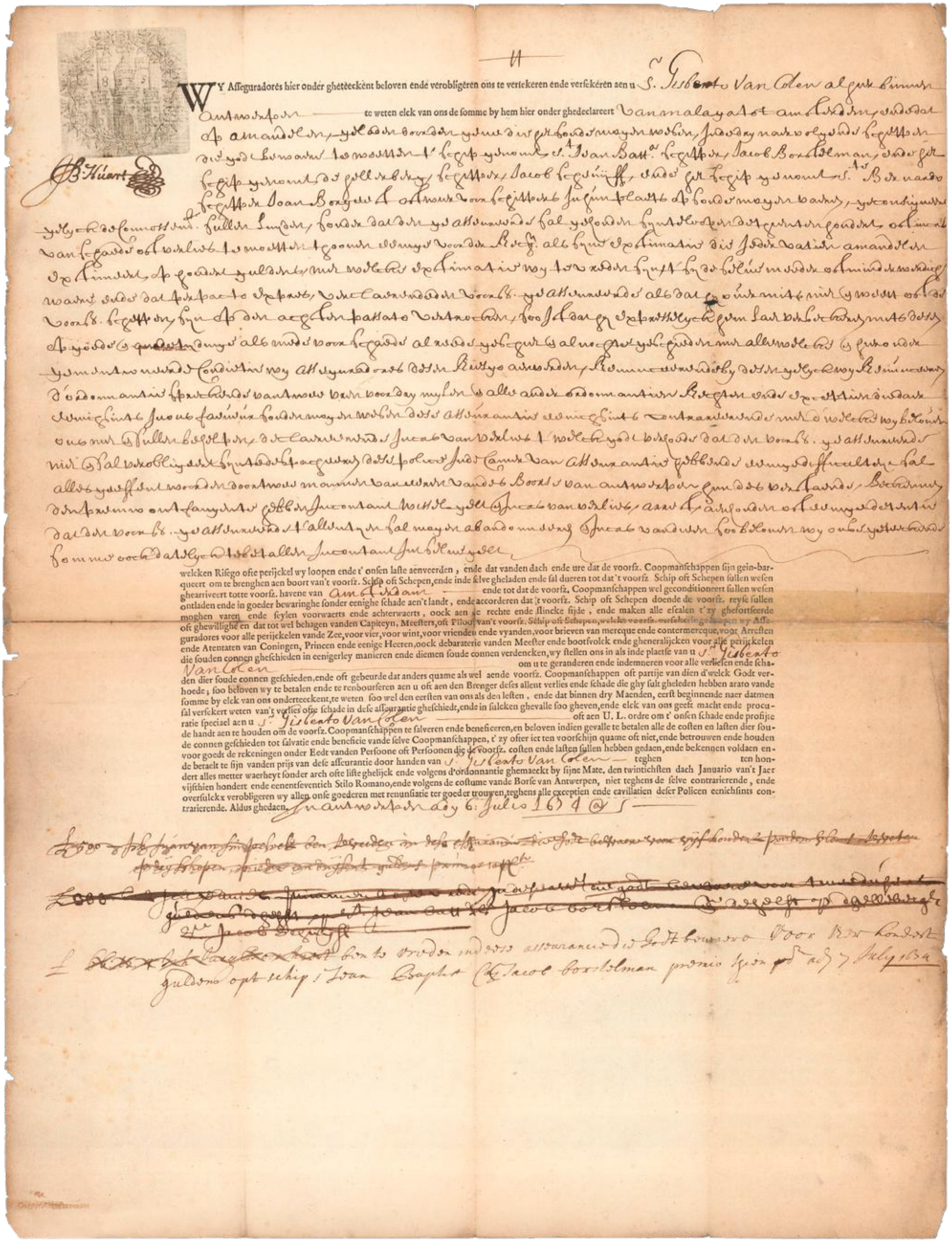
Trade documents received from the trading house De Brier-Van den Berghe-De Lannoy, from correspondents Gerard de Witte and Adrian Jan Winters (IB#2138).

Sale of lace by Helena Huttenis, part of the trade correspondence of the trading house Reyns (1728-1734), (IB#1853).

also for artists, civil servants, clergymen, ... networking was crucial to success. Once in a network, doors would open and opportunities would abound. Gaining fame and reputation strengthens the position you hold within the network. It is therefore important to highlight your assets. This can be done by settling in grand houses, owning a country estate ("court of plaisance") or acquiring a noble title. Accepting a position in the city's high civil service is another way to show off your wealth, and again brings with it the necessary prestige. Unlike today, high officials are expected to use their own capital when the treasury is short. But those who fly high can fall low. A small misstep can have big consequences. Rumours of inability to repay debts were enough to damage a merchant's credit and credibility and bring him before the amman court. Mistakes made by certain family members are fearfully concealed and tried to be resolved as quickly and quietly as possible. Reputation and family honour are extremely important assets. Nevertheless, the archive of the Chamber of Insolvent Estates offers research opportunities not only for economic investigations, but also for research into the history of attitudes and social history.

The contents of a business archive/estate

What does a business archive consist of? We have 153 business archives in the fund, but they are not all the same size or complete. From some merchants we have only recovered a small number of documents. Sometimes it is quite a puzzle to find out who the documents belong to. Take, for example, the estate of Juan Henriquez. We only have two anonymous ledgers. There is no indication on the cover or spine to whom the registers belong. It was only after a thorough reading of the contents that a name was suggested. For about five estates it is not possible to find out to whom they belonged. In addition to small archives, there are also very large estates with a huge treasure of family documents and household records, as well as the necessary commercial documents.



WY Affeguradorés hier onder ghetéecként beloven endé verobligéren ons te verfekeren ende verfekéren aen u S. Gisberto Van Colen [illegible]

te weten elck van ons de fomme by hem hier onder ghedeclareert [illegible]

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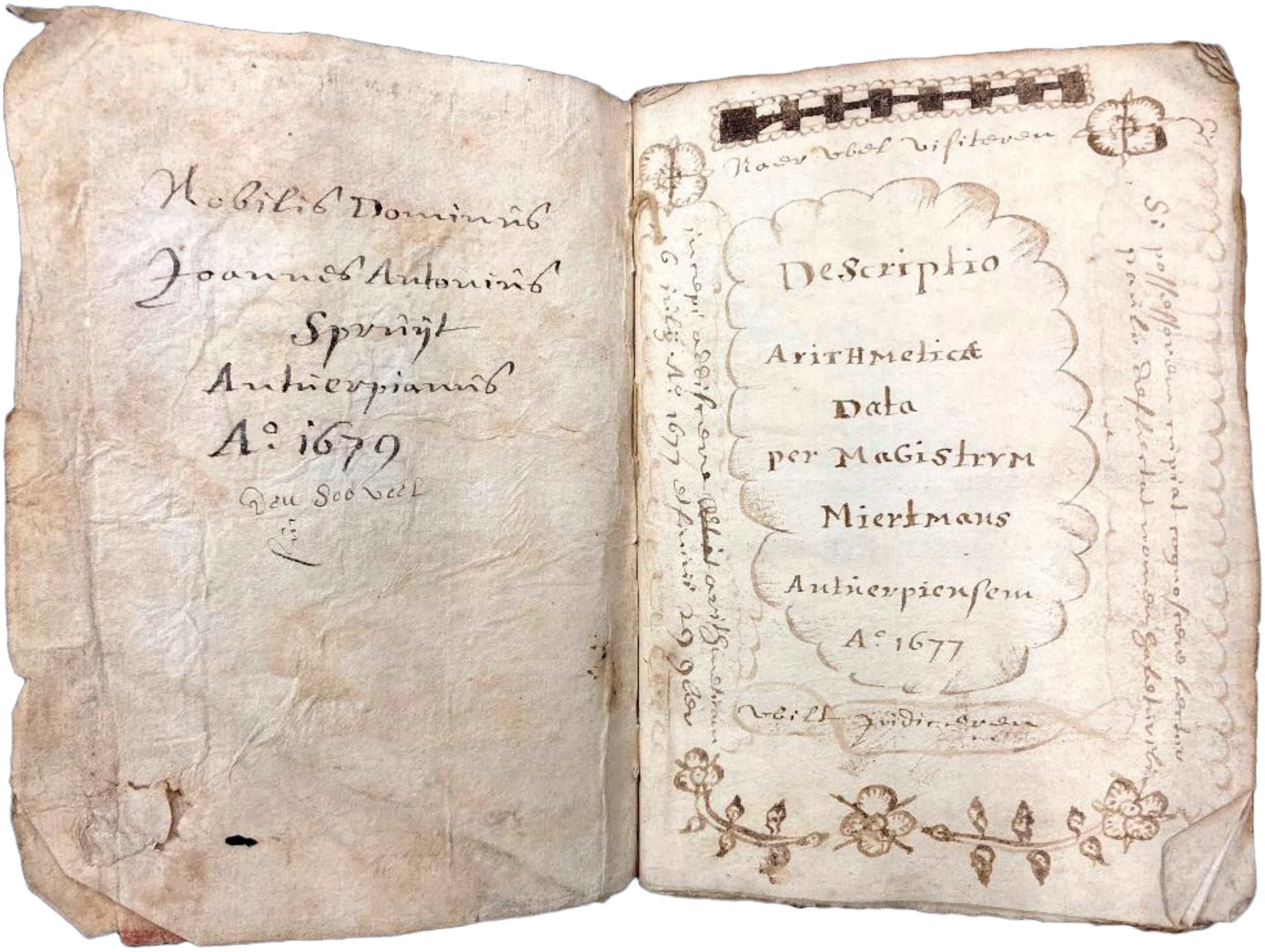
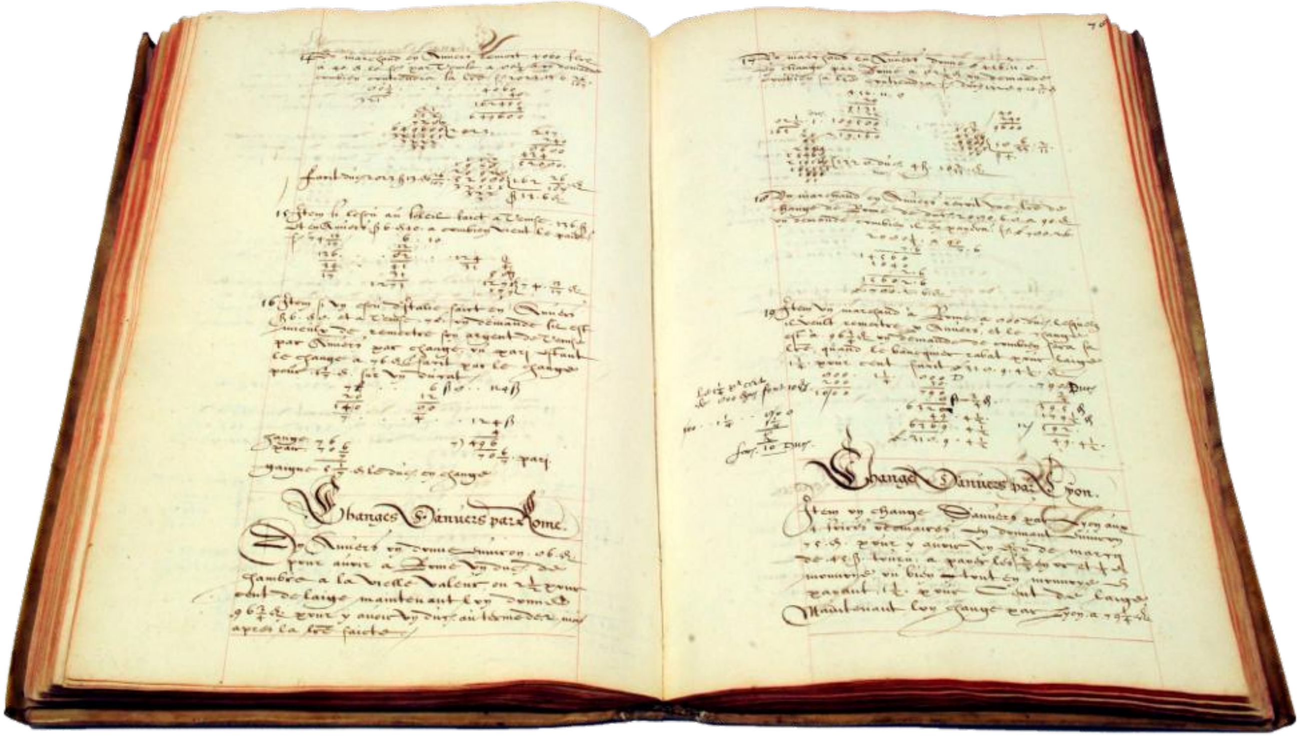
welcken Rifego ofte perijckel wy loopen ende t' onfen lafte aenveerden, ende dat vanden dach ende ure dat de voorfz. Coopmanfchappen fijn gein-barqueert om te brenghen aen boort van't voorfz. Schip oft Schepen, ende inde felve gheladen ende fal dueren tot dat't voorfz Schip oft Schepen fullen wefen ghearriveert totte voorfz. havene van Amsterdam ende tot dat de voorfz. Coopmanfchappen wel geconditioneert fullen wefen ontladen ende in goeder bewaringhe fonder eenighe fchade aen't landt, ende accorderen dat 't voorfz. Schip oft Schepen doende de voorfz. reyfe fullen moghen varen ende feylen voorwaerts ende achterwaerts, oock aen de rechte ende flincke fijde, ende maken alle efcalen t'zy ghefortfeerde oft ghewillighe en dat tot wel behagen vanden Capiteyn, Meefters, oft Piloot van't voorfz. Schip oft Schepen, welcke voorfz. verfekeringe loopen wy Affeguradores voor alle perijckelen vande Zee, voor vier, voor wint, voor vrienden ende vyanden, voor brieven van mercque ende contermercque, voor Arreften ende Atentaten van Coningen, Princen ende eenige Heeren, oock debaraterie vanden Meefter ende bootfvolck ende gheneralijcken voor alle perijckelen die fouden connen ghefchieden in eenigerley manieren ende diemen foude connen verdencken, wy ftellen ons in als inde plaetfe van u S.r Gisberto Van Colen om u te geranderen ende indemneren voor alle verliefen ende fchaden dier foude connen gefchieden, ende oft gebeurde dat anders quame als wel aende voorfz. Coopmanfchappen oft partije van dien d'welck Godt verhoede; foo beloven wy te betalen ende te renbourferen aen u oft aen den Brenger defes allent verlies ende fchade die ghy fult gheleden hebben arato vande fomme by elck van ons onderteeckent, te weten foo wel den eerften van ons als den leften, ende dat binnen dry Maenden, eerft beginnende naer datmen fal verfekert weten van't verlies ofte fchade in defe affourantie ghefchiedt, ende in fulcken ghevalle foo gheven, ende elck van ons geeft macht ende procuratie speciael aen u S.r Gisberto Van Colen oft aen U. L. ordre om t' onfen fchade ende profijte de handt aen te houden om de voorfz. Coopmanfchappen te falveren ende beneficeren, en beloven indien gevalle te betalen alle de coften en laften dier foude connen gefchieden tot falvatie ende beneficie vande felve Coopmanfchappen, t' zy ofter iet ten voorfchijn quame oft niet, ende betrouwen ende houden voor goedt de rekeningen onder Eedt vanden Perfoone oft Perfoonen die de voorfz. coften ende laften fullen hebben gedaen, ende bekennen voldaen ende betaelt te fijn vanden prijs van defe affeurantie door handen van S.r Gisberto Van Colen teghen ten hondert alles metter waerheyt fonder arch ofte lifte ghelijck ende volgens d'ordonnantie ghemaeckt by fijne Mate, den twintichften dach Januario van't Jaer vijfthien hondert ende eenentfeventich Stilo Romano, ende volghens de coftume vande Borfe van Antwerpen, niet teghens de felve contrarierende, ende overfulckx verobligeren wy allen onfe goederen met renunfiatie ter goeder trouwen, teghens alle exceptien ende cavillatien defer Policen eenichfints contrarierende. Aldus ghedaen, In Antwerpen adij 6: Julio 1674 @ 5

[illegible]

Insurance letter from Gisberto Van Colen (1674), (IB#106).



'Descriptio arithmetica data per magistrum Miertmans Antverpiensem Anno 1677', owned by Joannes Anthonis Spruijt (1679), (IB#2454).



Livre d'arithmetique (1587): arithmetic book written by Michiel Coignet, mathematician and engineer in the service of Archduke Albrecht (IB#2964).

Each business archive contains a mixture of commercial registers and correspondence. In most estates we find diaries, ledgers, memorials, account books, invoice books and cash books. In addition, there are the business letters. Copy books contain duplicates of letters written by the merchant to his agents, partners and other important businesspeople. Letters received by the merchant are also kept. On the initiative of city archivist Van den Nieuwenhuizen, the letters were separated from the other documents and filed alphabetically by the name of the correspondent. Lists of correspondents were drawn up, as well as a record of the places of dispatch and the period of correspondence.

The literature reports that the use of sample cards became a common technique in the late seventeenth and during the eighteenth century. In some cases, the archives contain sample cards used by merchants and agents. In the Reyns family's estate, for example, we find examples of the lace traded by the sisters, and the De Brier, Van den Berghe and De Lannoy families also kept samples. In a register of the De Wolf company, we find samples of textiles stuck in small reels.

Other commercial documents quoted in the literature can also be found. These include bills of exchange, assignments, debt notes and double-entry accounting.

Quite unique is the commercial textbook (IB#142) found in the Van Colen-De Groote estate. Denucé has devoted a book to this exceptional archival document.

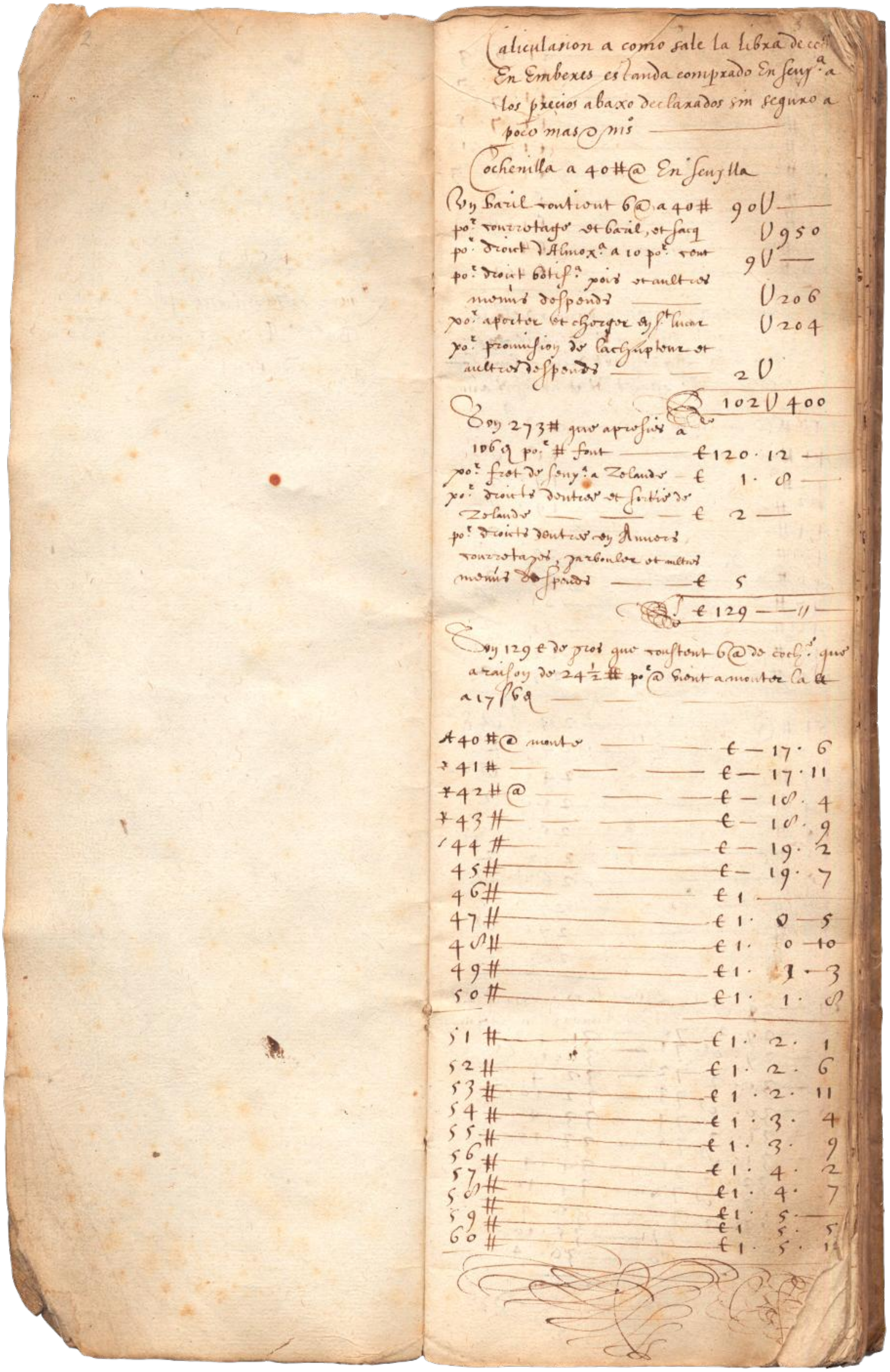
All the above-mentioned business documents are extremely interesting for the study of trade technology, economic trends, trade networks and many other trade-related studies. But the business archives of the Chamber of Insolvent Estates also contain a wealth of information for researchers in other fields, such as social history and the history of attitudes. Indeed, the archives also contain documents of a more personal nature, such as correspondence, wills, deeds of purchase of houses, household books and accounts, accounts of apothecaries, surgeons, for the purchase of food, for carriages and horses, for works on houses. Also included are documents relating to household rents, taxes and leases. Many times, court documents also appear.

Rightfully insolvent?

A number of merchants whose records are held by the fund are known to have come into contact with the amman during the course of their careers. In most cases, the business documents are impounded until the debtors have been paid, after which the trader gets his documents back and continues trading. The following are some such cases.

Balthazar Andrea (of the house of Andrea, de Moucheron and Perez de Baron) was born in Seville on 14 January 1577 and belonged to one of the most prestigious Spanish-Flemish firms. His father Jeronimo and his partner were involved in equipping ships in Zeeland and the early Dutch East India Navigation. Balthasar trades in diamonds and is also involved in ship insurance. Everything changed in 1622 when it became clear that Balthasar could no longer pay his debts. He is imprisoned in the Steen (the Antwerp prison situated in the castle of Antwerp). His wife paid off her husband's debts and Balthazar Andrea was never heard of again. We find the name of Balthazar Andrea in the consignment room mentioned by Verachter in his unpublished inventory.

We have previously mentioned the Van Immerseel house. The business archives of the van Immerseels and the Clarisses were originally very mixed, as Jan Denucé informs in his article on this family in the Antwerps Archievenblad. The reason for this is not clear. The Van Immerseel merchant family is mainly represented by father Jan and his sons Chrysostomo and Willem (Guillermo). They dealt mainly in silk sheets, but also in Kortrijk cloth, Oudenaarde carpets, lace, Havana leather, books and paintings. While Jan looked after the business in Antwerp, son Chrysostomo moved to Seville to open a trading office there. Later Willem travels to Seville and takes over the business. However,



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Cochenilla a 40#@ En Seuylla

Un baril contient 6@ a 40# — 90U
po.r courretage et baril, et sacq — U950
po. droit d'Almox.a a 10 po.r cent — 9U
po.r droit bolsil.a poids et aultres menus despends — U206
po.r apoiter et charger a S.t Lucar — U204
po.r provision de lachapteur et aultres despends — 2U
— 102U400

Soy 273# que a profits a 106 g po.r # font — £120. 12
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po.r droits d'entree et sortie de Zelande — £ 2
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A 40#@ monte	£ — 17. 6
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46#	£ 1
47#	£ 1. 0 — 5
48#	£ 1. 0 — 10
49#	£ 1. 1 — 3
50#	£ 1. 1. 8
51#	£ 1. 2. 1
52#	£ 1. 2. 6
53#	£ 1. 2. 11
54#	£ 1. 3. 4
55#	£ 1. 3. 9
56#	£ 1. 4. 2
57#	£ 1. 4. 7
58#	£ 1. 5. —
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Commercial documents from the estate of the Andrea-Pérez de Moucheron family (IB#8).

William became a confidant of the Spanish monarch, who entrusted him with diplomatic missions. This success was not to last. William died young, leaving behind considerable debts, which only accelerated Van Immerseel's decline. Business was so bad that Chrysostomo was imprisoned in Seville with a mountain of debts. Meanwhile, in Antwerp, his house in the Keizerstraat, his furniture and his goods are sold to pay off the debts. Eventually Chrysostomo was released, but difficulties continued to haunt him until his death in 1652.

Gerard Gramaye, steward and general treasurer of Antwerp also met the amman. Gramaye, Lord of 's Gravenwezel, precious stones merchant and financier of the King, the State and the nobility, made a name for himself as the man of the lotteries. He brought a lot of money into the King's treasury through the lotteries. Gerard Gramaye held several official positions of a financial nature. Up to three times, Gramaye's books and papers were confiscated (1568-1569, 1571 and 1580) and he was involved in several lawsuits during his career. However, this did not prevent him from continuing his business successfully each time.

In the 17th century, Frans Van der Heyden, a merchant in leather, hides and, above all, paper, had many Antwerp printers among his customers. Van der Heyden's busiest trade was with the Compagnie van Immerseel (not to be confused with the Van Immerseel family mentioned above). Van der Heyden was embroiled in a long legal battle with the Compagnie, which he lost in 1625. Part of his estate was seized, and his business went bankrupt.

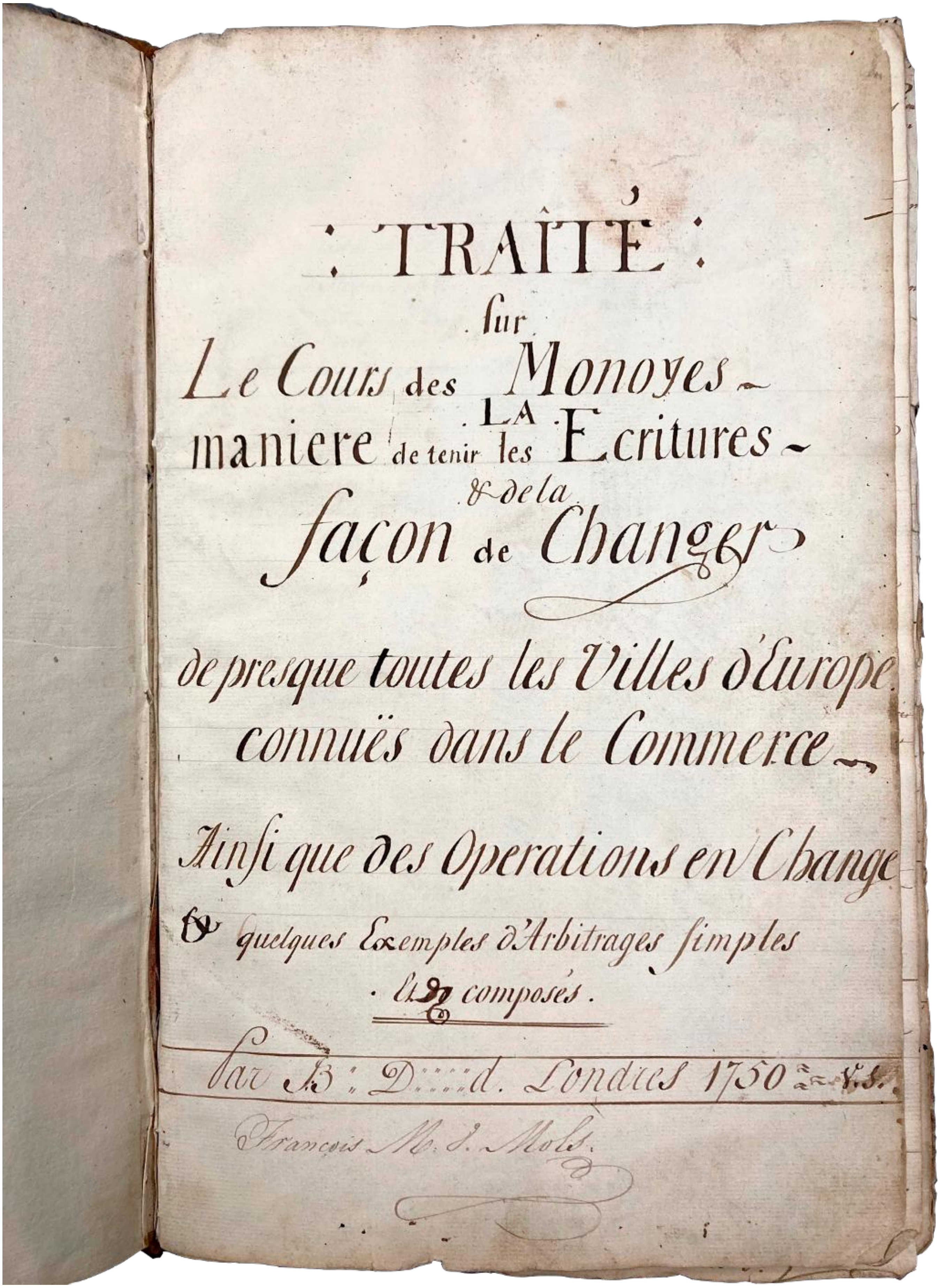
The business documents of Matheus and Jan De Pester are also being preserved in the archives. Father Matheus, who manufactured Leuven beers, held the office of the city's "biersteker" (the person in charge of determining the alcohol/beer ratio of beer for excise tax purposes) and the chief dean of the Gilde van de Jonge Handboog (Guild of the longbow).

After his father's death, Jan De Pester took over the office and also traded in Leuven beer. On his death in 1750, he left a wife and children in need of money. In order to pay off her husband's debts, the widow asked for permission to sell the remaining goods on the Vrijdagmarkt. It was the alderman's intervention in this sale that most likely brought De Pester's business papers into the city.

The trade and affairs of Jan Baptist De Wolf have been discussed above. As the city's administrator, the cloth trader Jan Baptist had an important position to fill. The De Wolf family traded in cloth and owned a large shop on the Meir where they sold manufactured cloth. In 1755, Jan Baptist took over and expanded internationally. He was appointed administrator. Business flourished until 1789, when things took a fateful turn. Jan Baptist speculated in his private company with city funds. To avoid possible bankruptcy, Jan Baptist withdrew from the business, but in vain. The Wolf estate is mentioned by Verachter in his inventory, but separately from the consignment room.

Conclusion

We have taken you on a brief journey through the history and contents of the business archives gathered in the Chamber of Insolvent Estates. In the first half of the twentieth century, Denucé came up with an attractive name to enhance their value. He opened up the Chamber of Insolvent Estates and its treasures. Today, we know that the Chamber never existed as an archive or record room as such, but its contents are unchanged. The treasures are still there, well preserved in solid, acid-free boxes. Many a researcher has studied them, and the possibilities are endless. We hope that in the future more researchers will find their way in and help to unlock even more secrets of the (trading) past through the archives.


: TRAITÉ :
sur
Le Cours des Monoyes
LA
maniere de tenir les Ecritures
& de la
façon de Changer
de presque toutes les Villes d'Europe
connuës dans le Commerce
Ainsi que des Operations en Change
& quelques Exemples d'Arbitrages simples
et composés.
Par B: D....d. Londres 1750 v.s.
François M. d. Mols.

'Traité sur le cours des monoyes, manière de tenir les ecritures et de la façon de changes', preserved in the Mols estate (1750), (IB#3028).

Appendices:

- Sources and Bibliography
- Chronological overview of merchants

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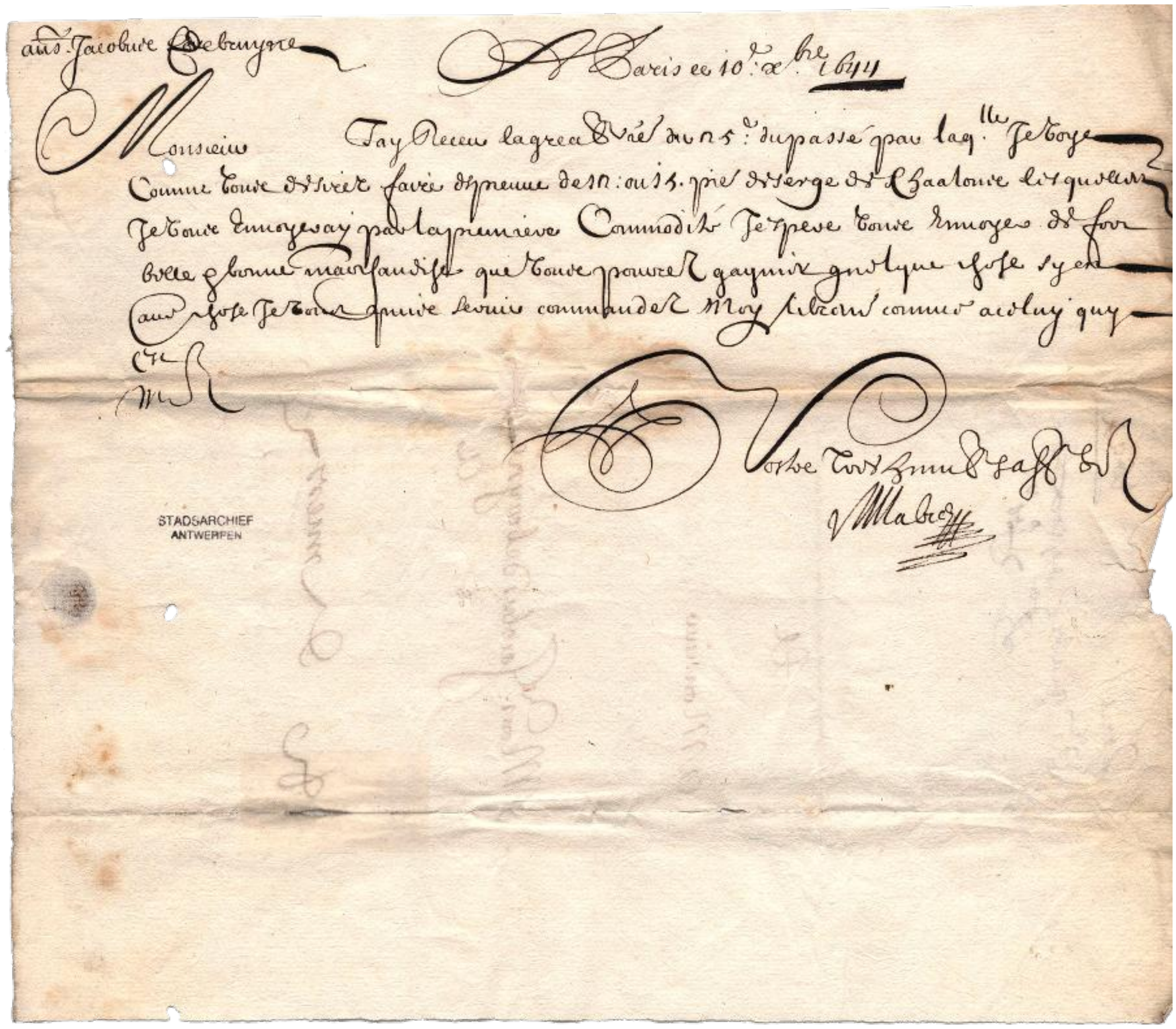


a Mons. Jacobus Debruyne — Paris ce 10 Xbre 1651

Monsieur J'ay Receu la greable vostre du 25 du passé par laq.lle je voye comme vous desirez faire despreuve de 10 ou 15 pie. de serge de Chaalons lesquelles je vous envoyeray par la premiere commodité. J'espere vous envoyer de fort belle & bonne marchandise que vous pourrez gaignier quelque chose s'y en aux chose je vous puisse servir commandez moy librem.t comme a celuy qui est Monsieur

Vostre tres humble serv.r

Mabre

Correspondence between the De Bruyne trading house and correspondents Pierre Mabre and Pieter Macaré (1651-1653), (IB#839).

Chronological overview of all merchants

De Pape, 1524-1573: IB#770-787 and IB-SUPL#17-18. Cloth merchant. From 1556 onwards he was also in charge of collecting the wine excise duty. Next to cloth, he also traded hops, spices, hides, grain and cattle.

Jozine Laureyssen, 1538-1542: IB#2836. Real estate and land proprietor.

Pieter van der Molen, 1538-1544: IB#2898. Spice and cloth merchant.

Pauwel Luydincx, 1538-1592: IB#2407-2415. Became a master builder and as a result was involved in the reconstruction of the Antwerp town hall and the construction of the Antwerp Stock Exchange. He also served as deacon of the Guild of the Old Handbow.

Spruyt, 1538-1725: IB#891-935, IB-SUPL#19-21, 26-29, 68, 127-129, 131-1932. This insolvent estate has almost no business archive but is made built up of the archives pertaining to the management of the property of a number of family members.

Gilbert Van Schoonbeke, 1548-1602: IB#2968-3021. A renowned engineer and architect, who was responsible for many of the changes operated in the city of Antwerp. He started construction a new city (nieuwstad) to the north of the city centre. He also designed a number of squares and streets. Next to this, he also focused on a number of commercial activities, including among others supplying the army with food and textile products. The latter activity worked much to his disadvantage and riots broke out, targeting him directly.

Michiel Coignet, 1549-1623: IB#2964. A mathematician, scientist and made a career as a writer. His calculation book has been preserved.

Overview of bills of exchange from Jacop de Raedt/Raet (1650), (IB#2389).

Jan de Ridder, 1555-1576: IB#2923. Baker.

De Bruyne, 1557-1579 and 1644-1676: IB#788-887. These are archive documents of two members of the De Bruyne family. On the one hand, Daniël, clerk, active in the Antwerp lotteries and responsible for collecting wine excise duty. On the other, Jacob, accountant, traded cloth, fabrics, fur, wine, lace, tapestries, spices and paper.

Gerard Gramaye, 1561-1582, IB#766-769. Merchant, treasurer and steward-general of Antwerp. Active in buying and selling property and best known for lotteries.

Juan Henriquez, 1562-1563: IB#2314-2315. Maritime insurance.

Antonio Del Rio, 1563-1578: IB#2390. Master of Cleydael (Aartselaar) and the treasurer general of all impounded estates under Philip II. The archive documents are related to Cleydael Castle.

The Clarisse family, 1565-1682: IB#230-247. Traders of saye yarn, worsted wool, sugar, silk fabrics, Brussels tapestries.

Adriaenssens, 1566-1724: IB#2960.

Moriel, 1567-1568: IB#2899. The cousins Jehan and Mathieu traded fabrics and colonial goods.

The Affaitadi company, 1567-1568 and 1633-1695: IB#1578-1595, IB#3030 and IB-SUPL#61. The Affaitadis (Jan Baptist and Jan Carlo) were descended from an old noble family from Cremona and held the exclusive rights to the spice trade. They also operated as bankers. Their descendants became landed gentry and owned property in Lier and the surrounding area.

The Van Immerseel family, 1574-1653: IB#248-291 and IB-SUPL#121. This family mainly traded linen, Baltic grain, potash, indigo, Brazilian lumber and alum.

Criecke, 1578-1580: IB#2810. Fabrics trader.

The Wallis and du Jon families, 1578-1656: IB#733-765 and IB-SUPL#66. The Scottish nobleman Thomas Wallis settles in Antwerp where he trades cloth and dyes as well as Scottish salmon. He was also a money lender to several noble families. His daughter marries Paul du Jon, dealer in linen and diamonds.

Peter Janssen-Houbraken, 1582-1595: IB#2956.

The van der Schelstraten family, 1584-1714: IB#1522-1545 and IB-SUPL#1. Silk traders. And within the family we also find Emmanuel van der Schelstraeten, canon and later librarian of the Vatican.

Jacob Wellens, 1592-1618: IB#2416-2420. Traded leather and hides.

Frans van der Heyden, 1592-1627: IB#888-890. Paper merchant. He sold leather and hids.

Lenaert Rogghe, 1594-1616: IB#2924. Linen trader.

Balthasar Andrea de Moucheron en Perez de Baron, 1594-1622: IB#1-8. Diamond dealer.

Goyart Janssen, 1595-1607: IB#2830. Cloth merchant.

The Boussemart company, 1599-1677: IB#1390-1399. Trader in Flemish art objects.

Jan Spannenborch and Catelyne van Hontsum, 1600: IB#2927.

Jan Baptist Vrients, 1600-1615: IB#2936-2938. Book trader.

The van den Gevel, Van Ophoven and van Ems families, 1602-1700: IB#936-1032, IB-SUPL#23-23, 67, 77. Trade of linen.

The Le Candèle family, 1606-1740: IB#1400-1521 and IB-SUPL#6-8. They mainly traded fabrics and tapestries.

The van Colen, de Groote and Hureau families, 1606-1771: IB#11-132. Trade in wool, lace, linen and books.

Henrick van Nieuwenhuysen, 1610: IB#2900. Preparation and paints book.

Jacques Cekouheer and Abraham de Hu, 1611-1614: IB#2805. Textile merchants.

The de Weer-Tholincx company, 1611-1664: IB#1560-1576. Silk, linen, Spanish wool and indigo. Also involved in various monetary operations.

The Forchondt company, 1611-1711: IB#1033-1255, IB-SUPL#24-25, 40-52 and 95. Trade in jewellery, art objects, diamonds, wool, hides, lace and jenever.

Reyns, 1612-1772: IB#1822-1860. Women traders in lace and diamonds.

The Borrekens family, 1614-1710: IB#1256-1389. Linen, wine and wool.

Diego Pardo, 1615-1620: IB#2908. Tapestry merchant.

Jacques Aertssen, 1616-1652: IB#2796-1798. Textile merchant.

Jan van der Bequen, 1616-1655: IB#2378-2388, IB-SUPL#2 and 9. Traded corn and textiles.

Jan Hermans, 1617-1669: IB#1546-1549. Merchant in spices, fabrics, wool, passementerie and cotton.

The economic archive of the de Pret family, 1617-1862: IB#2456-2718. Traders in many things, including diamonds, wine and textiles. Founders of the "Generale Indische Compagnie", admitted to the nobility and also holders of various city offices.

Series "Commercial documents", 1617-18th century: IB#2446-2455.

Godgaf Verhulst, 1618-1650: IB#2263-2264. Printer and bookseller.

Unknown traders, 1618-1751: IB#2948-2952.

Jan van Keyssel, 1620-1639: IB#2376-2377.

Gillis Meulenberghs, 1620-1686: IB#2893-2897. Paper merchant, grocer, glassmaker and glazier.

The de Groote-Herincx family, 1621-1736: IB#133-229. Exports of Flemish textile and imports of southern spices.

The de Wannemaecker family, 1622-1716: IB#2395-2397. Merchants, pharmacists and fabrics traders.

Peter Fabry, 1623-1633: IB#1577. Old clothes seller.

The Musson-de Wael family, 1624-1723: IB#292-732 and IB-SUPL#15. Art objects, ebony, furniture and mirrors.

Alexander Lemmens, 1626-1627: IB#2840. Old clothes seller.

Thomas de Sampayo, 1626-1666: IB#2783-2795. He was appointed cashier of the general payment service of the Spanish army.

Nikolaas Passavant, 1631-1634: IB#2421-2424.

Van Mol, 1634-1648: IB#2430-2432. Wood worker and wood merchant.

Hendrik Bertels, 1634-1676: IB#2398-2401. Spice trader. He fled to an unknown destination after committing murder.

The Boon family, 1634-1678: IB#2273-2287, IB-SUPL#84, 86-87, 89-90. Fishmongers, jewellers, traders in diamonds, prints and maps.

Jan van der Essche, 1635-1670: IB#2817.

Stroobant, 1640-1654: IB#2930. Trade in jewellery and diamonds.

Jonker Jacobus de Raet, 1640-1655: IB#2389.

De Brier, 1643-1679: IB#1861, 1864-1865, 1870-1875, 1879, 1888, 1913-1915, 2255, 2257-2262 en 2196-2218. Yarn and fabric trade.

Unknown merchant, 1644-1789: IB#3036.

The van Cantelbeeck family, 1645-1670: IB#2373-2375. Traded textile, food and art objects.

Dirk Crebbers, 1648-1659: IB#2809.

Wauters, Thisius, Cockx en de Wael, 1648-1724: IB#2391-2394. Trade in tapestries.

The Casens, De Coene, Kaderaeck, Frederickx, Heylinck, Van Haelen, De Negrone, Scheimacher, Verssen families, 16-18th century: IB#3037.

Abraham Verdonck, 1657: IB#2935. Linen trade.

De Cantelroy, 1657: IB#2947.

Unknown merchant, 1657-1660: IB#3035. Spice trade.

J. and W. Bosschaert, 1659-1800: IB#3032-3034.

Jacques de Lannoy, 1661-1728: IB#1867-1869, 1876-1878, 1880-1887, 1889-1906, 1908-1912, 1916-2155, 2256, 3038. Lace trade.

Jan Van Coevorden, 1662-1681: IB#2344-2349. Lace and other textile.

Francisco Boesdoncq, 1664-1668: IB#2800.

Van Diest-Sucquet and de Longin, 1666-1727: IB#2265-2272, IB-SUPL#38-39, 55-60, 62, 64, 79. Cloth merchant.

Smits, 1668-1669: IB#2929.

Cornelis van Oostenrijck, 1670-1697: IB#2902-2907. Tavern keeper.

Van den Berge, 1671-1685: IB#1862-1863, 1866, 1881, 1907, 2156-2195. Wax trader.

Jean de Schott, 1676-1677: IB#2926.

Van der Meeren, 1676-1775: IB#2352-2353. Diamond trader and jeweller.

Phil. Van Breuseghem, 1680-1693: IB#2963. Silk trader.

Smout, 1680-1703: IB#2945. Goldsmith.

Mathijs Cras, 1680-1715: IB#2806-2808. Textile trader.

A.J. Rösel van Rosen, 1685-1698: IB#2964. Tapestry trader.

The widow Jacomo La Houst, 1685-1699: IB#2834. Diamond trader.

Ignatius de Thiellieu, 1688-1693, IB#2931. Wool trader.

Unknown tapestry trader, 1688-1700: IB#2966.

Boudewijn Pieterssen, 1688-1760: IB#2912-2913. Soap maker.

Jacobus de Jonghe, 1689-1694: IB#2946. Mason.

Peter Van Rossem, 1689-1701: IB#2925. Beer seller.

Jacobus Geerts, 1690-1747: IB#2437-2444. Butcher.

Peer de Borchgrave, 1693-1699: IB#2801.

Cornelis de Leeuw, 1694-1727: IB#2837-2839. Pharmacist who traded fabrics and clothes.

Nicolaas van Dam, 1694-1749: IB#2811-2813. Hops trader.

Unknown trader, 1695-1697: IB#3029.

Anna van der Eecken, 1698-1703: IB#2816. Linen trader.

The van Lidt de Jeude company, 1698-1829: IB#2841-2886. Linen trader and lace business.

Jacob de Man, 1699-1708: IB#1550.

Nicolaes Naulaerts, 1699-1709: IB#2961-2962.

Melchior van Wolschaten, 1700-1709: IB#2940. Book printer.

Vincque, 1700-1715: IB#2958.

The Mols, de Mendieta and de Wael families, 1700-1799: IB#3023-3028, IB-SULP#82.

Unknown insolvent estate, 1705-1707: IB#2967.

Frans Folie, 1706-1722: IB#2818. Stonemason.

Joseph van Heurck, 1707-1767: IB#2824-2829. Linen trade.

Tobias de Ridder, 1709-1733: IB#2922. Pastry maker and grocer.

Wouters, 1712-1823: IB#2941-2944. Porcelain trade.

Carel Kemp, 1713-1758: IB#2832-2833. Diamond trader.

De Proli, 1715-1817: IB#2719-2782. Banker, industrial, colonial trade.

Unknown silk trader, 1719-1730: IB#3031.

Frans Eeckelaer, 1719-1748: IB#2814-2815. Textile merchant.

De Pester, 1720-1747: IB#1814-1821. Manufactured Leuven beers. We also know him as the city's biersteker (the person in charge of determining the alcohol/beer ratio of beer for excise tax purposes) and as the head deacon of the Guild of the Old Handbow.

J.B. Carnonckel, 1726-1747: IB#2804. Furniture maker.

Tillemans, 1727-1760 : IB#2402-2406. Butcher.

James Dormer, 1729-1777 : IB#1596-1813, IB-SUPL#11. Diamond trade, banker and Insurance Chamber.

Jacobus Peuttemans, 1730-1750: IB#2911. Shoemaker.

Gaspar van Merlen, 1731-1743: IB#2892. Bookkeeper.

G. Verboven, 1732-1745: IB#2934. Yeast trader.

Antoon Dom and widow, 1733-1771: IB#1551-1559 and IB-SUPL#10, 12-14, 30-37. Retailer and spice and food merchant.

Hoffinger, 1734-1752: IB#2354-2372. Fashion house selling women's clothing.

J.P. van Baurscheit, 1736-1766: IB#2953-2955. Sculptor and architect.

Ignatius van der Boven, 1738-1742: IB#1946.

Wagemans, 1738-1778: IB#2350-2351. Gardener and wine tavern.

Jozef de Fossez, 1741-1762: IB#2819-1820. Fabric merchant.

The de Wolf company, 1741-1791: IB#2288-2313. Cloth trader, public servant in the town council.

Blomme, 1742-1770: IB#2959.

Frans Cornelissen, 1743-1756: IB#2429. Leather merchant.

Unknown insolvent estate, 1743-1759: IB#2957.

Adriaan Aerts, 1746-1763: IB#2433-2436. Trader in colonial goods, fish and spices.

Van Haelen, 1749-1752: IB#2821. Butcher.

Jan van den Bogaert, 1749-1776: IB#2325-2343, IB-SUPL#85. Spice trader.

Jacobus van Raemdonck, 1750-1787: IB#2425-2426. Flax and wood merchant.

Meyers - van de Werve, 1751-1833: IB#2316-2324.

Mary Goodwijn, 1759-1760: IB#3022.

Jan Martin Smets, 1763-1772: IB#2928.

Van Tilborghe, 1766-1769: IB#2932. Lace trader.

P.J.P. van Parijs, 1766-1781: IB#2909. Book trader.

D'Hessens, 1768-1771: IB#2822-2823. Trader in colonial goods and hides.

Joannes D. Melis, 1769-1771: IB#2891. Yarn merchant.

Jan Courtyn, 1772-1773: IB#2445. Wood trader.

Petrus Jeuninckx, 1776-1781: IB#2831. Trader in colonial goods and diamonds.

J. Lambrechts, 1776-1782: IB#2835.

Antonis de Peuter, 1776-1788: IB#2910. Spirits merchant.

Cornelis van de Velde, 1777: IB#2933. Beer trader.

Jacobus Oomen, 1781-1785: IB#2901. Trader of colonial goods.

Egid Wappers, 1782-1783: IB#2939. Merchant and estate agent.

J.A.J. de Lincé, 1784-1791: IB#2887.

Van Bladel and Moons, 1786-1788, IB#2799. Yeast traders.

Antoon Jozef Beke, 1786-1792: IB#2427-2428. Cloth merchant.

Maes, 1787-1791: IB#2888-2890. Leather, wine and fabrics.

The widow van Bouwel, 1791-1797: IB#2802. Trade of colonial goods.

The link to the home page of the archives of the Chamber of Insolvent Estates, which may be of interest for more detailed searches:
https://felixarchief.antwerpen.be/archievenoverzicht/145

FONDAZIONE
BANCO
di NAPOLI

The Historical Archive of the Bank of Naples

Inscribed in the UNESCO "Memory of the World"
Register on May 24, 2023

6. Giug.o 1769

220

E per esso li sud.i doc.ti duecento venti lib.i pag.ti al Sig.r D. Nicola Piccinni, e so[no] per tanti da noi promessoli per aver scritto l'opera rapp.ta nel Real Teatro di S. Carlo intitolata il Demetrio, seguendo d.o Sig.r D. Nicola ne resta sod[disfatto] con questa per d.a causa e per ogni altra causa. Nap. 6. Giugno 1769.

Gaetano Grossi [illegible]

6829

6. Giug.o 1769

The Historical Archive of the Bank of Naples. Testimony of an economic revolution

The inclusion in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register of the Apodissario Fund of Neapolitan public banks represents a moment of particular significance for the documentation that the *Banco di Napoli* Foundation, according to its statute, is called to protect and enhance. The recognition, obtained in May 2023, greatly empowers the consciences and aims of those who have worked with this large amount of documentation for many years and of anyone who has devoted his energies to spreading its value and informative peculiarities.

The Neapolitan banking system and the disruptive introduction of credit certificates (*fedi di credito*) unmistakably marked the relationship between man and money in the society of modern Catholic Europe. The vast series of documents produced by the public banks are nothing other than the product and the detailed testimony of this innovation. Entry into a club of such international importance does not only mean recognising work carried out during these years with commitment and dedication. For the Fondazione Banco di Napoli, this is a moment of important recognition and a stimulus to improve its services for accessing and enhancing this documentary heritage. Furthermore, it offers the opportunity to participate in profitable international networks of similar institutions. It is awarded the same recognition and is equally relevant to the heritage of historical memories that this prestigious register intends to represent.

Joining the *Archivos Históricos Comerciales UNESCO* project, alongside other archival institutions such as the Simón Ruiz Archive in Medina del Campo, the the Archive of the Chamber of Insolvent Estates in Antwerp, the business archives of the *Officina Plantiniana* of the Museum Plantin-Moretus, and the Archive of the Dutch East India Company in The Hague, is the first valuable attempt to carry out joint international initiatives and to concretely systematise the heritage of experience of economic archives as irreplaceable witnesses of the evolution of human communities in the long term.

Orazio Abbamonte
President of the *Banco di Napoli* Foundation

The Historical Archive of the Bank of Naples

Andrea Zappulli
Archivist of the Historical Archive of the *Banco di Napoli*

One archive, many producing entities

The Historical Archive of the *Banco di Napoli* is the largest private economic archive in Europe. The linear extension of its shelves exceeds 100 kilometres and places it in comparison with the large and heterogeneous complexes of documentation entrusted to the care of the State authority. This gigantic documentary testimony is, technically, a company archive. In a succession of about four centuries, the many producing entities that created it saw their institutional destinies proceed first in parallel and then merge into two successive institutions. A succession of entrustments and successions of conservative entities has crossed the centuries surprisingly linearly.

The chronological span covered by the documentation is between 1573 and 1999[1]. The institutional name of the archive could be misleading. The name *Banco di Napoli* refers, in fact, only to the last of the entities producing such documentation and to the institution that, from 1860 onwards, was responsible for the care and subsequent reorganization of the documents. Institutions of a completely different nature produced the first documents found in the archive in the years preceding the foundation of the public banks that arose in Naples between 1539 and 1640, which began the production of the documentation that today flows into the extensive archive held by the *Fondazione Banco di Napoli*.

The birth and development of the activity of these institutions are of great interest to the study of economic history and financial innovation in Europe. Due to their characteristics and the activities in which they specialized, they contributed significantly to the evolution of the relationship between man and money.

These banks did not arise as entrepreneurial activities of individual families, on the model of Central and Northern Italy merchant bankers who dominated European finance in the late Middle Ages. Nor were they direct emanations of municipal or state power designed by the same power to manage their debt or resolve their monetary problems. Nor were they institutions born under the aegis and control of the Catholic Church and the clergy from which, although obsequiously, they remained completely independent and detached. These banks arose as autonomous institutions, received recognition from the state power (in particular, from the authority of the Spanish viceroys), the approval of the religious authorities and hastened to equip themselves with statutes and regulations that characterized their government and operation. From the beginning of their banking activity, they were independent institutions with their rules.

They were born, except the last one[2], alongside existing charitable works. Pawnshops, charities, hospitals, religious congregations, all these institutions equipped themselves with a

1 The first accounting record, utterly unrelated to the life of credit institutions, dates back to 1504 and is found in a book of the *Casa Santa dell'Annunziata*, the institution from which the bank of the same name was born, the recognition of which occurred in 1587.

2 The *Banco del Santissimo Salvatore*, founded in 1640, arose from the initiative of the complex group of interests that revolved around the collection of the tax on flour (*gabella della farina*) and the inversions made by the investors.

The rooms of *Palazzo Ricca* and *Palazzo Cuomo* were used as the General Archive of the Banks starting in 1819. Since then, the building, now the headquarters of the *Fondazione Banco di Napoli* and its archive, has never ceased to preserve the papers produced by the ancient Neapolitan public banks and their successors.

bank. They thus found the problematic point of agreement between the restrictions that Catholic morality imposed on credit and banking activity and the needs of a rapidly growing society and city.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Naples presented itself as the ideal laboratory for a drastic evolution in the panorama of credit and finance for Catholic Europe. At the time, it was the second city on the continent in terms of population, after Paris, the epicentre of a demographic growth that would change its urban fabric and make it the undisputed centre of all of Southern Italy. Furthermore, Naples, starting in 1505, was located in what would become one of the first globalized power systems, the Spanish Empire. The dispute between France and Spain over controlling vast areas of the Italian peninsula was resolved in favour of the latter. In Naples, as in Palermo and Milan, the rulers and governors of the Iberian Crown settled.

At the beginning of the century, the time of the independent kingdom of Naples ended. After the Swabian, Angevin and Aragon dynasties, the time of the viceroys began, and Naples embraced the cause of the Spanish Crown with initial enthusiasm. Its position was even more strategic when the crown passed, with Charles V, to the Habsburgs. It became the fulcrum of a concrete hegemonic project that would bring the Habsburg insignia to the Americas, the Philippines and the great battles against the Turkish power in the Mediterranean. For about a century, Naples was actively involved in the Habsburgs' attempts to establish themselves in a dominant position in Europe, first actively and then as a centre for collecting and recovering resources.

This situation created new needs and new opportunities in the large port in the shadow of Vesuvius. The need for new forms of access to credit spread, more permissive and accessible for operators and beneficiaries, and the demand for new means of purchasing goods and services spread. Means were less fragile and more secure than the silver coins circulating in the Kingdom. Furthermore, the need to remedy the constant leakage of silver from the borders of the Kingdom and the poor quality of the metal currency that began to afflict Naples, and its provinces was increasingly evident.

The viceroys and the most active religious orders focused on resolving these new and essential issues. Also, to cope with the economic efforts necessary for the Habsburg campaigns (in 1535 the costly Tunis expedition was realized), the viceregal power began to rethink its relationship with the bankers in Naples. The great financiers of Genoese, Tuscan, and Catalan origins who were active in the Kingdom were not considered up to the level of support necessary for the crown and, above all, not adequate to resolve the problem of the circulation of silver money.

In 1539, the *Monte di Pietà* was founded. It was, as is known, a widespread institution in Europe whose legality and diffusion were due, above all, to preaching the Franciscan order at the end of the 16th century. The *Monte di Pietà* was born everywhere as an interest-free pawn shop committed to satisfying the most immediate needs of the poorest sections of the population.

Monte was immediately actively involved in the city's new economic dynamics. It was quickly authorized to carry out the typical activities of a bank, with the acceptance of deposits and the provision of loans at a fair interest rate, as established by the Lateran Council of 1517. Even the Catholic Church, through the constant preaching of the Order of the Regular Clerics or Theatine Fathers, expressed its approval of the activities of this new operator, which, differentiating itself from the private initiative of families or individual merchants, proposed itself as a supervised institution with precise statutes, firmly linked to the Catholic principles of the Counter-Reformation. In 1559, an apostolic brief by Pope Paul IV sanctioned indulgence for anyone who donated to the Monte di Pietà in the following three years.

What will take the name of *Monte e Banco di Pietà* introduces, in its most solid and widespread form, a title destined to radically change the economic dynamics of southern Italy and to bring relief to the long-standing problem of damaged silver and coins. The "fede di credito" began to circulate. It was a title that the Monte e *Banco della*

The file (*filza*) hanging from the ceiling was the traditional method used by Neapolitan banks to store the credit certificates. The *filze* were rarely moved, because all the information was traceable in the books of account.


OTBRE
NOBRE
1605

Pietà issued against a cash deposit. It essentially represented a promise from the bank that it would be capable of being transferred to third parties and, therefore, perfectly usable as a payment method. This transferable title's strength was guaranteed by the trust enjoyed by the issuing institution, engaged in charitable activities, and by the favour it enjoyed with the administrations. The "fede di credito" was accepted by the viceregal authorities as a means of payment on a par with cash, and this guaranteed its authoritativeness and usability.

This extraordinary innovation and the growing difficulties of the traditional banks, managed in most cases by families and financiers of foreign origin, paved the way for a change in the banking landscape in Naples[3]. After the *Monte di Pietà*, seven other institutions were born, engaged in the same activities of credit, circulation, management of public debt and all except the last, the *Banco del Santissimo Salvatore*, founded in 1640, were deeply linked to a charitable work or a holy house of which they were a direct emanation. These eight institutions, defined as public banks, provided Naples with a modern banking system and prevailed over private bankers, becoming, for a long time, the only credit interlocutors of the court and the population. Suppose their credit activities were similar to the accounting registration system. In that case, the nature and origin of these institutions show their particularities and helps to define the social and economic landscape in which they arose and prospered.

3 At the beginning of the 17th century, private banks gradually disappeared until 1604, when the Spinola, Ravaschieri, and Lomellino bank sold its activities to the Monte e Banco della Pietà.

Bundles of bonds of the *Banco di San Giacomo e Vittoria*. The current method of storing the bonds is no longer the *filza*, but nowadays they are collected in envelopes with an increasing number of storage (*stringa*).

The eight public banks of Naples

Monte e Banco della Pietà (1539)

The *Sacro Monte e Banco della Pietà* was the first, by foundation, of the eight public banks of Naples. Its activity as a pious pawnshop dates to 1539. After many changes of location, at the end of the 16th century, the *Monte di Pietà* found its definitive location in the current Via San Biagio de' Librai, along the road that crosses the city's old centre. The *Monte di Pietà* followed the late medieval tradition of the *Monti di Pietà*, born in central-northern Italy through the preaching of the Franciscan fathers. This preaching was recognized as legitimate in 1517 in the aforementioned Lateran Council. In Naples, the foundation of the Monte was due to the preaching of the Theatine Fathers, particularly San Gaetano di Thiene and the blessed Andrea Marinoni. The primary mission of the *Monte e Banco di Pietà* was to help victims of usury and offer a more equitable and charitable pawn lending service. From these initial activities, the institute evolved and became a credit institution dedicated to all the case operations.

Monte e Banco dei Poveri (1563)

The *Monte e Banco dei Poveri* was established from the initiative of some lawyers of the *Gran Corte della Vicaria*, the criminal court of the Kingdom of Naples. In 1585, the *Monte* was authorized to carry out banking activities, and in 1599, it definitively merged with another company of a philanthropic-religious nature, the *Compagnia del Santissimo Nome di Dio*. After a brief stay in the *Santi Apostoli e San Giorgio Maggiore* churches, the *Monte dei Poveri* found its definitive headquarters in Palazzo Ricca, acquired in 1616. The main work of the Monte was to help and assist those imprisoned for debt. The *Monte e Banco dei Poveri* became the bank of the jurisdictional power of the city. The Historical Archive of the *Banco di Napoli* is currently kept in its headquarters in Palazzo Ricca, before what was once the *Gran Corte della Vicaria*. It is home to the *Fondazione Banco di Napoli*, its owner and promoter.

Banco dell'Annunziata (1587)

The *Casa Santa dell'Annunziata* had offered a deposit service since the late fifteenth century, but its nature as a public bank was recognized in 1587. The *Annunziata* appeared to be a sizeable medieval hospital that owned land and income and had the highest reputation among the popular classes of the Kingdom. The bank supported Casa Santa's activities. In fact, it transformed into one of the largest banks in the Kingdom, and its management gradually distanced itself from the objectives of protecting and caring for orphans, from the marriage of girls and from all those activities that were part of the charitable institution that inspired the bank. In 1702, the bank went bankrupt and closed its doors, the only one of the eight institutions not to overcome a crisis and to be closed. Its headquarters were always adjacent to the church of the *Annunziata* in Naples.

Banco di Santa Maria del Popolo (1589)

The *Banco del Popolo* was created to support the activities of the *Casa Santa di Santa Maria del Popolo* and the annexed *Ospedale degli Incurabili*. Therefore, the bank's main task was to financially support the hospital's operation. From 1623 to 1636, the bank, which was in a poor economic state, was managed directly by representatives of the City of Naples. In 1636 it returned to connect with the charitable institution. This peculiarity made it the reference bank for the fiscal policy of the city power and the reference for a large part of the system of furnishings, loans and public debt of the viceregal court. The headquarters of the bank were in Via dei Tribunali, at the height of the church of San Lorenzo.

Banco di Sant'Eligio (1592)

The *Banco di Sant'Eligio* was closely linked to the *Casa Santa* and the *Hospital of Sant'Eligio*. Its purpose was to support the functioning of the hospital and, being adjacent to the basilica of the same name in *Piazza Mercato* (Market Square), to help the community of merchants and artisans in the area. Its organization included a craftsman in the management of the bank to represent the art of shoemakers, as evidence of the participation of the merchant and artisan class in the management of the institute.

Banco dello Spirito Santo (1594)

The *Banco dello Spirito Santo* was established from the action of the brotherhood of the Holy Spirit, whose main task was assisting young orphans at risk of a sinful condition. For this reason, the Banco found its headquarters next to the Conservatory of the Holy Spirit or of the Virgins, in the upper part of Via Toledo, in the *Bianco Mangiare* area.

Banco di San Giacomo e Vittoria (1597)

The Banco was founded to serve the increasingly sizeable Spanish community in Naples. It also arose to support the charitable works of a charitable institution, the *Basilica di San Giacomo e Vittoria*. In the eighteenth century, the Banco became the reference institution of the Bourbon Court and the Crown, eventually becoming the *Banco di Corte*. The bank was located near the basilica in the current *Piazza San Giacomo*, currently the City Hall.

Banco del Salvatore (1640)

In 1640, the flour tax collectors and officials obtained authorization to create their own bank to facilitate the functioning of the tax system entrusted to them. The system of levies and surrenders on flour had generated a class of officials and investors responsible for mobilizing a considerable amount of money. Hence, there is a need for a new institution. The bank, the only one without a welfare and philanthropic purpose, found its headquarters in *Piazza San Domenico*, not far from the church and Dominican convent of *San Domenico Maggiore*.

All these institutions offered services to the city and the kingdom throughout the Modern Age. Between 1806 and 1810, they gave way to a central institution: the *Banco delle Due Sicilie*, destined to last until the Unification of Italy.

Documentation of the *Sacro Monte and Banco della Pietà*. The first of the registers of the *Apodissario* dates to 1573.

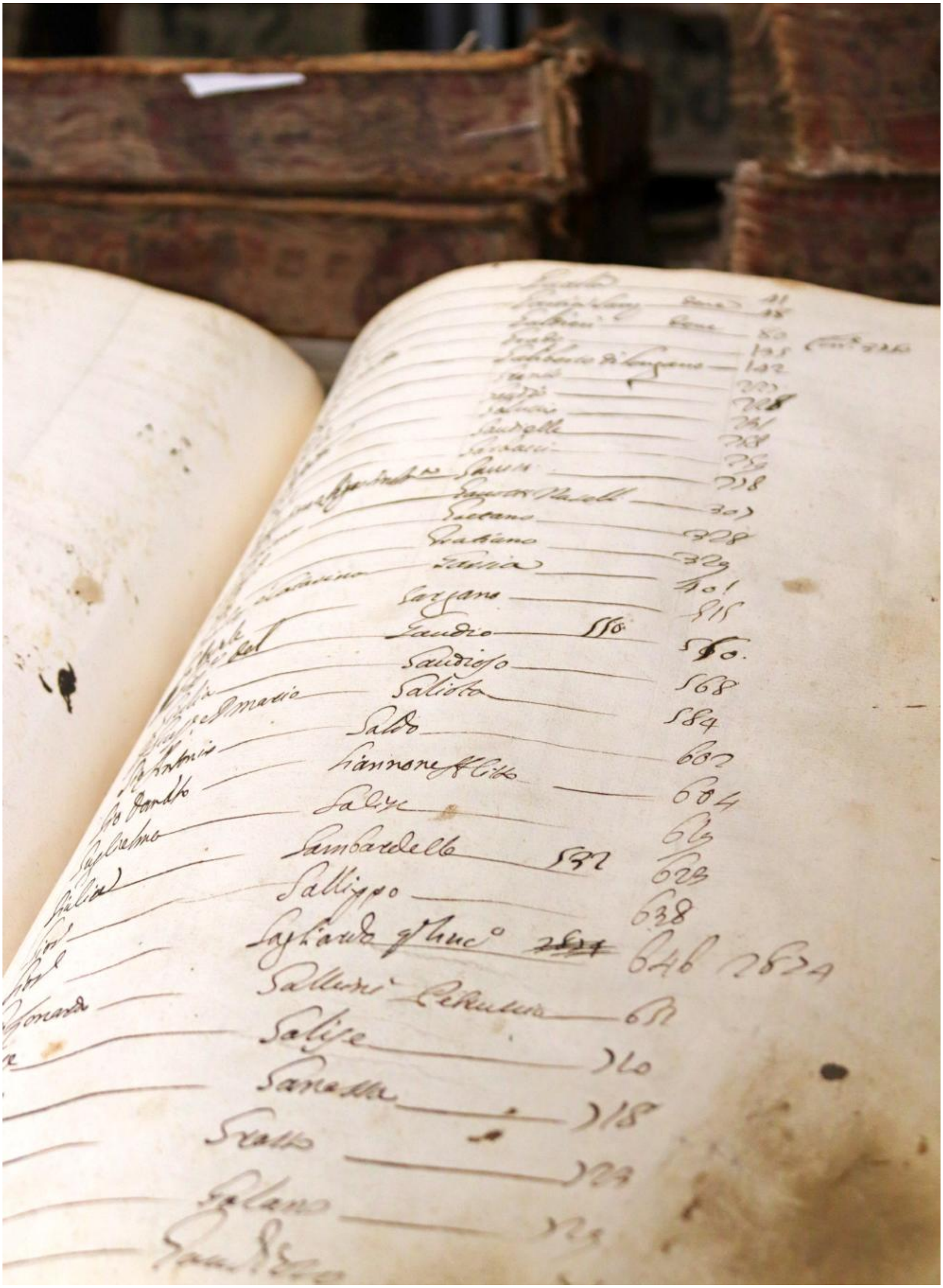
Registers of the *Banco di San Giacomo e Vittoria*. This institution was founded in 1597, under the influence of the Spanish community of Naples.

The *copiapolizze* journal collects the payment reasons originally written on the bonds. Next to the reason for payment, on the left, is the number of the page of the ledger containing the payer's account and, on the right, the value in ducats (*ducati napoletani*) of the transaction.

The *Banco delle Due Sicilie* and the *Banco di Napoli*

Already in 1803, the system of the seven banks (in 1702 the Annunziata had been declared bankrupt) showed signs of evident instability and inadequacy concerning the changing needs of society and the Kingdom. The strong guarantee of the immediate convertibility of the credit bonds into cash, for their exact value, had begun to fade, and this led to the creation of a Deputation of the *Apodissari*, which had the task of protecting the banks' creditors. The arrival 1804 of Joseph Bonaparte on the Neapolitan throne marked the beginning of a process of reforms, sometimes fierce and sometimes challenging to implement, which influenced the banking landscape until 1810. A series of legislative interventions led first to creating of a Court Bank of a Private Bank, then to the courageous project of building a central bank supported by a group of shareholders. The institution, called *Banco Nazionale delle Due Sicilie*, debuted in 1808. Still, it did not pass the test of facts, nor the distrust of Neapolitan society towards initiatives of that type.

In November 1809, the end of the distinction between the operations of *Banco di Corte and Banco Nazionale* was sanctioned through the creation of a single institution, which was given the task of serving both the General Treasury and the needs of private depositors: the *Banco delle Due Sicilie*. This institution gave continuity to the circulation of the "fede di credito", and in 1818, it also equipped itself with a *Cassa di Sconto* to meet the growing credit needs related to trade. Despite the new competitive landscape, due to the entry into the Kingdom of new and more dynamic financial operators, the banco collected the centuries-old legacy of the Neapolitan public banks. Furthermore, since 1819, the transfer of all the documents of the ancient banks was started to create a single extensive banking archive under the government and protection of the *Banco delle Due Sicilie*.



The *pandetta* collects, in alphabetical order by name, the bank's current accountants. It usually has a six-monthly frequency, but there are also annual or quarterly registration.

The institution survived the Napoleonic period and accompanied the Bourbon dynasty until its fall and the Italian unification process. Subsequently, the same credit institution took the name of *Banco di Napoli* in 1861. It went through national events until very recently, continuing to play a role of enormous importance in the Italian economy and the development of the South. It is enough to mention the role assumed by the *Banco di Napoli* from 1902 to 1929 regarding the protection of the savings of Italian emigrants abroad, the diffusion of the money order for emigration or the financing of the country's industrial and urban planning policy. The *Banco di Napoli* will conclude its existence as an autonomous body following traumatic and explosive events in 1997-1999.

From 1819 until today, the history of the archive

In the aftermath of the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty, the issue of the reforms that had been brought as a dowry by the French rulers in that troubled period arose throughout the Kingdom. One of the most significant reforms, as mentioned, was the reformulation of the system of public banks, with a gradual series of reforms that led to their merger and the start of the activity, in 1810, of the *Banco delle Due Sicilie*.

Therefore, the same need for reform and centralization arose concerning the documentation of the ancient institutions and daily production by the *Banco delle Due Sicilie*. Even the project to centralize all the documentation in a single place betrayed the desire to follow up on that impulse of rationality that the French period had brought as a dowry to the Kingdom. There was the belief that access to historical documentation could constitute a service for the public and, therefore, an interest to be protected for the new credit institution.

In 1819, a royal decree established the creation of the General Archive of the banks. It indicated the former headquarters of the Monte and *Banco dei Poveri* as the location for conserving the documentation. The following year, Giambattista Giffuni, general secretary of the regency of the bank, was tasked with developing a project for the structure of the archive. At that time, the papers were scattered in several places. The documents of the *Banco della Pietà*, the *Spirito Santo*, the *Popolo*, the *Santissimo Salvatore* and the current *Cassa dei Privati* were located in the premises of the former *Banco della Pietà*. At the location indicated by the decree, those of the *Banco dei Poveri*, *Sant'Eligio* and a part of those of the *Banco di San Giacomo* were already located. Most of the documents of the bank it-

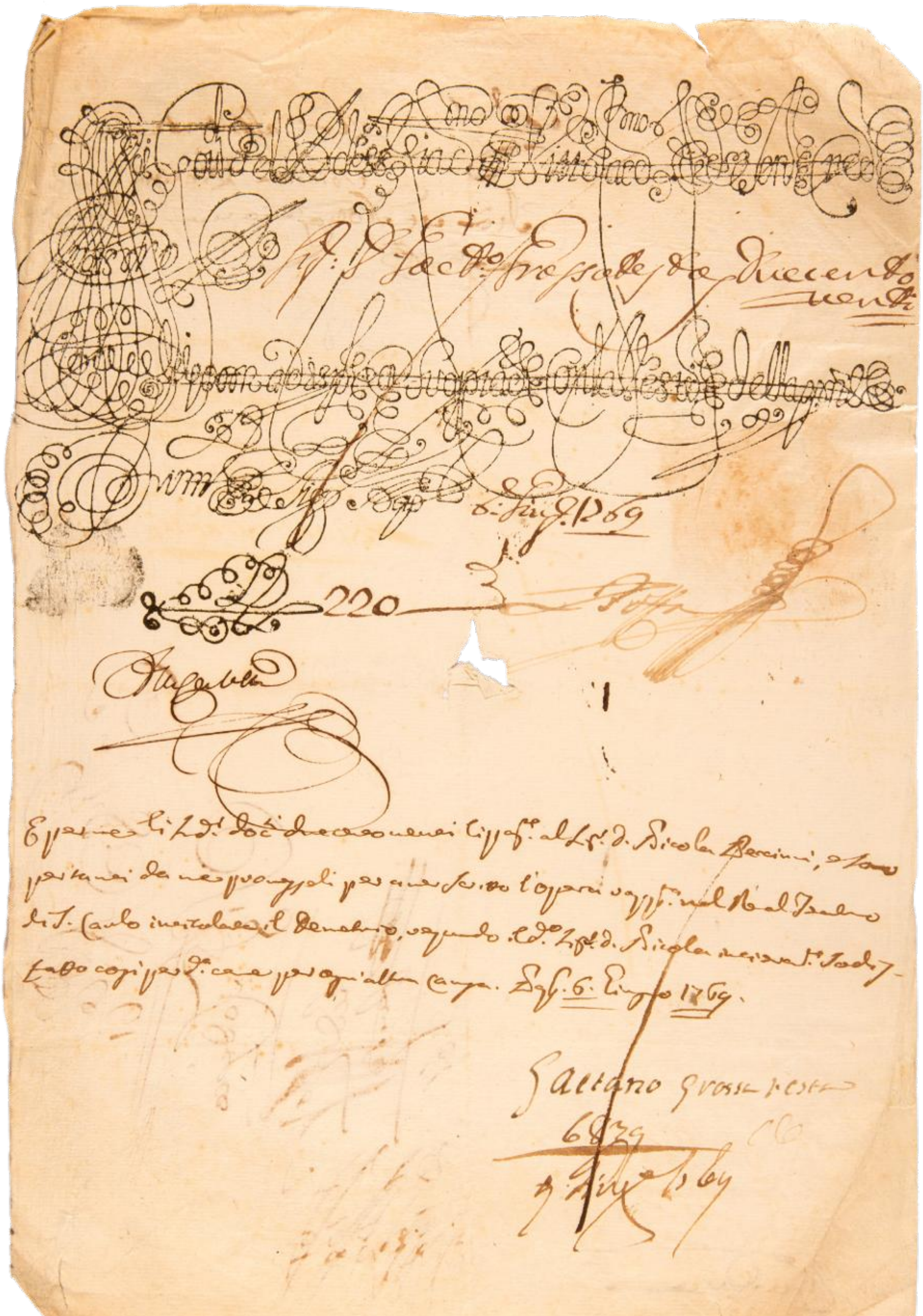
The registers' denominations are often decorated with the coat of arms of the bank to which they belong and with a letter indicating their first archival signature. In this case, it is a journal of the *Banco dell'Ave Gratia Plena*, commonly known as *Banco dell'Annunziata*, and marked with the letter C.

self and the current *Cassa di Corte* were situated in building that belonged to the *Banco di San Giacomo*.

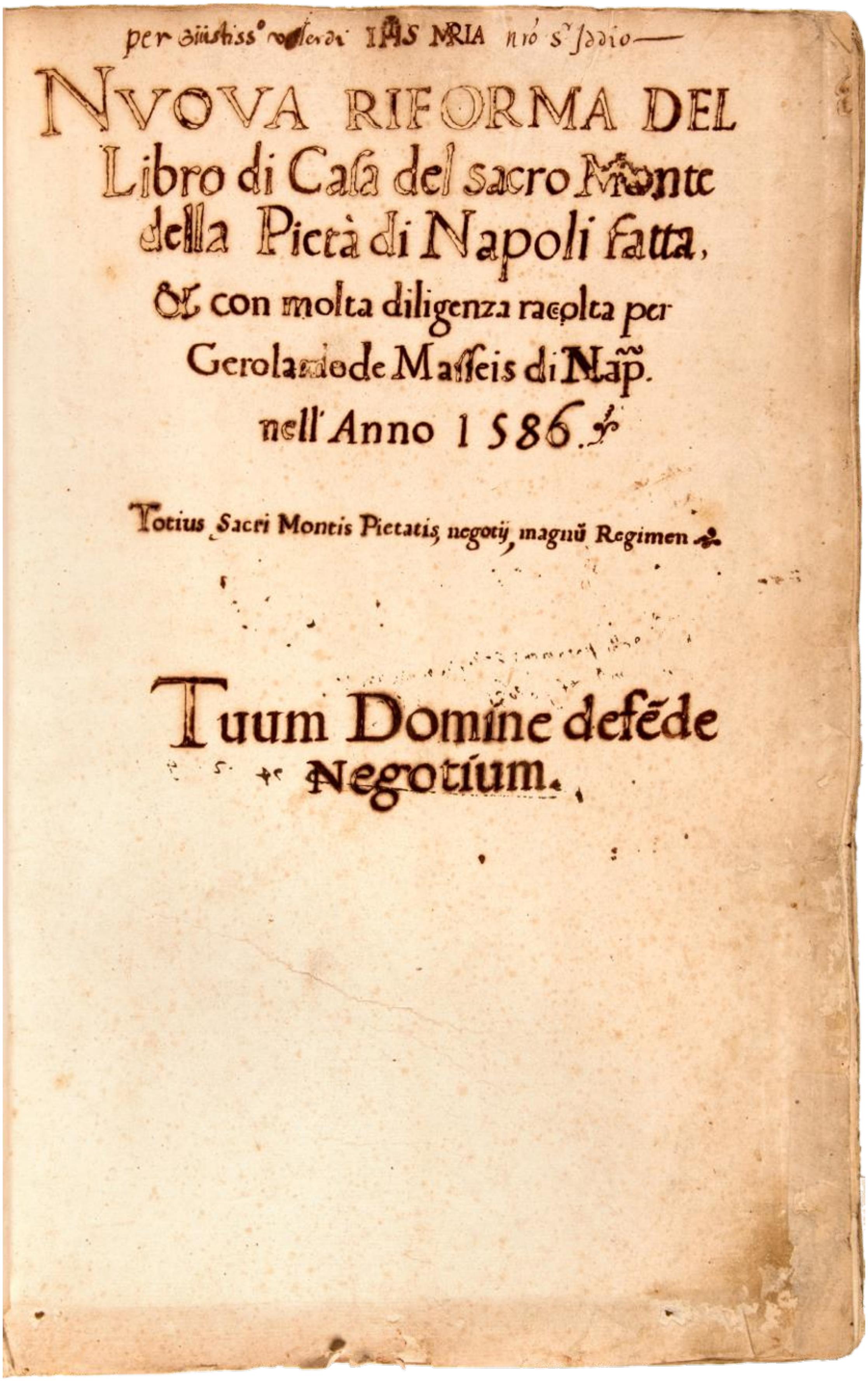
The plan envisaged a division between the *Banco della Pietà* and *San Giacomo* documents and those of the remaining five banks. The first two groups of documents were considered to be in more direct continuity with the current private funds (called *Cassa Pietà*) and the *Cassa di Corte*. The documentation of the *Banco dell'Annunziata*, which went bankrupt in 1702, had not been taken into consideration and was kept in the premises of the charitable institution of the same name, at the disposal of the organization managed by the group of creditors of the now-extinct bank. The documentation would have been arranged orderly, room by room, and the rooms would have been accompanied by epigraphs indicating the typology, the producing subject and the chronologies present in the environment–a hint of topographical orientation to the writings. Even the inventories, although repertoires, were initially conceived about each storage room and not to the archival funds themselves.

The recovery of the complete documentation of the *Banco di Sant'Eligio* and the *Banco del Popolo* was particularly complex. This is because, due to institutional events, the municipality of Naples and the State Archives of Naples were involved in various capacities in the delivery and identification of the documentation. In the first half of the 17th century, the *Banco del Popolo* was managed directly

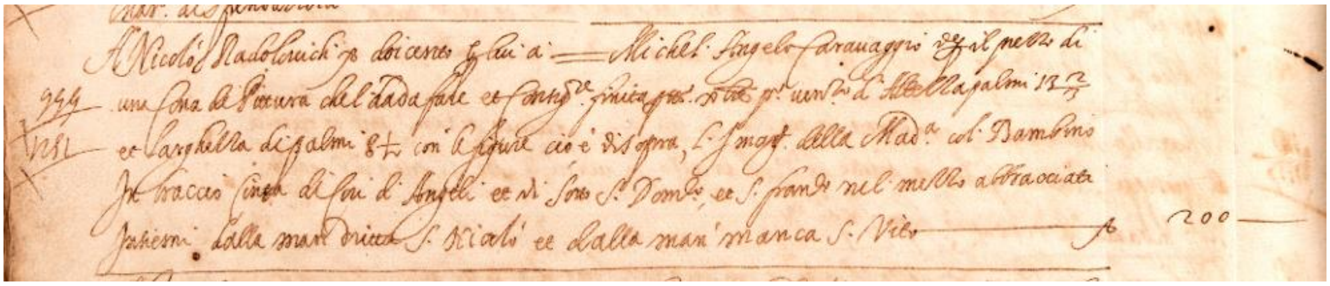
Coat of arms and first signature on the edge of a *copiapolizze* journal of the *Banco dello Spirito Santo*.



Credit Certificate of the *Banco di San Giacomo e Vittoria*, issued on 6 June 1769. The credit certificate was an authenticated sheet of paper, with a dry stamp and decorations, in which the bank swore on its position as debtor towards the depositor. At the top is the bank's certification, at the bottom is the description for the use of the sum.



House book, serial number 6 of the patrimonial of the *Sacro Monte e Banco della Pietà*. The Neapolitan public banks conducted their activities immersed in the atmosphere of the Counter-Reformation and in the belief that they operated as institutions oriented towards solidarity and the warnings of the Catholic Church.



Reason for payment of 6 October 1606, *copiapolizze* journal of the *Banco di Sant'Eligio*, serial number 31. The descriptive reason for this journal highlights the commission by Nicolò Radulovich to Michelangelo Merisi, universally known as Caravaggio. The payment is the first documentary trace of the great Lombard painter in Naples and describes a never-before-discovered work by the great painter.

by the city administrators, with long-lasting consequences on the conservation and management of the documentation produced. But the last papers to reach the General Archives were those of the *Banco dell'Annunziata*. At the mercy of the organization of the "creditors' group", the papers were held for a long time as one of the sources of income to be used to reduce their credit. Only in 1857, when the said organization of creditors was dissolved, did the documentation transfers begin, which were completed in 1868.

The archive's fate –finally housed in Palazzo Ricca– remained summarily suspended until the beginning of the century. In 1909, under the guidance of Nicola Miraglia, the *Banco di Napoli* began to take an interest in its historical documentation. Some commissions were created to study and publish research on the documentation. In 1939, when IV century anniversary of the birth of the Monte e *Banco di Pietà*, the first volume of a *History of the Bank of Naples* was published, which finally made extensive use of the documentation of the ancient institutions.

In 1950, the General Archive of the Banks, as it was defined by the decree of 1819, changed its name to the Historical Archive of the *Banco di Napoli*, explaining its function more precisely. The papers in current use were transported to the former headquarters of the *Banco di Pietà*. In contrast, Palazzo Ricca and the adjacent Palazzo Cuomo were permanently used as storage and study rooms for historical documentation. At the end of the 1950s, under the direction of Professor Domenico Demarco, the work of inventorying and reorganizing the documents began, thus beginning the era of widespread consultation and accessibility to the Historical Archive of the *Banco di Napoli*.

The care and enhancement of documentation have become an increasingly concrete reality, especially since the birth of the *Banco di Napoli* Foundation in 1991. The Foundation –initially the control and management body of the *Banco di Napoli*– has always had in its statute the objective of preserving and improving the Historical Archive of the *Banco di Napoli* even when the fortunes of the banking institution declined and led to its disappearance as an autonomous body, the Foundation remained independent and actively engaged in its statutory program. The Statute cites this in article 4:

The Foundation recognizes the Historical Archive, with its annexed Library-Newspaper Archive, its link with the past and its bond with its tradition. Its protection and enhancement are an unfailing institutional goal. It is inalienable.

Studies, research and the constant opening of a study room with free admission available to the community have animated the archive's life and kept the attention on the importance of its economic documentation. In May 2023, these efforts led to the registration of the oldest and largest nucleus of the Foundation's historical archive, the *Fondo Apodissario degli antichi banche pubblici napoletani*, in the UNESCO "Memory of the World" Register. This recognition has come to underline a path of protection and growing centrality of the documentation of the ancient banks by the Foundation and its instrumental body, the *Fondazione il Cartastorie*, which heads the eponymous archive museum.

The "credit note" and its weight in the development of the economic system

The reasons why the *Apodissario* fund of the Neapolitan public banks was registered in the Memory of the World Register are to be found not so much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The Historical Archive of the *Banco di Napoli* extends over four floors, and the shelves of the storage rooms exceed one hundred linear kilometres in length. The documentation of the *Apodissario* is arranged by placing the large major books on the lowest shelves, together with the *pandette*. The diaries, on the other hand, occupy all the middle shelves and the original credit certificates (*fedi di cambio*) are kept in envelopes above.

in the extraordinary dimensions of this set of writings but in its unique characteristics and in its ability to testify to a point of critical innovation in the history of the relationship between man and money. The foundation of this innovation is the introduction of the Neapolitan banking system, the title of the "credit note," and its widespread diffusion throughout the Kingdom for over three centuries.

The habit of using the "credit note" as a means of payment was marked, at the beginning of the 16th century, as a turning point for the monetary and financial policy of the then Vice Kingdom of Naples. From the beginning of their activity, the charitable places' banks began to carry out deposit collection operations. In exchange for the deposit of cash at their cashiers, these institutions issued a "credit certificate", that is, a paper title that reported, through a dry stamp with graphic symbols, the sworn attestation by the governors or protectors of the bank ("let us certify that") of the deposit having been made and of the consequent debt position of the Bank towards the depositor. Its acceptance by the depositor constituted, in fact, a materialization and acceptance of a promise by the Bank to be in a debt situation and to have to return the deposited amount or transfer it to third parties, according to the depositor's instructions, at any time and for the exact amount deposited.

The possibility of transferring to third parties, through a written order on the certificate itself, contributed to its success, so much so that the fiduciary circulation within the Kingdom was preferred to hard coins. Furthermore, thanks to the presence of a notary in the staff of the banks, the clauses and conditions affixed to the credit certificates assumed legal value and increased their probative value. These were not abstract and, therefore, not very transparent titles since the endorsements, in most cases, were explanatory and descriptive about the reason for the payment, the possible settlement of a higher amount or simply about the object of the transaction.

Thanks to an economy that has passed mainly through the system of public banks for over three centuries, the characteristic just described becomes a source of wealth and information that would otherwise be irretrievable. It provides the archive with an enormous descriptive capacity regarding the daily life, finance and economic system of Southern Italy and the Mediterranean. Since millions and millions of payments made through the "credit notes" carry with them an attached reason, often highly detailed, it is thus possible to read in depth the daily expenses of merchants, institutions, statesmen and ordinary citizens from the mid-sixteenth century to the last years of the nineteenth century and, although more rarely, even beyond.

The *Apodissario* Fund of the Historical Archive of the *Banco di Napoli* was born and developed thanks to the introduction of the "credit note" and the securities derived from it. The accounting registers constituting its heart are a system of recovery and stable conservation of the information initially present on the note.

In addition to the "credit certificate", the banks routinely accepted payment orders that were not issued initially by any institution. These were loose policies, payment orders issued directly by the depositors who had not been issued any certification at the time of deposit. Security focused on the fiduciary relationship between debtor and creditor, without any intervention or guarantee by the bank. They were used for amounts lower than 10 ducats. They gradually became the object of an increasing series of guarantees by the public banks, which, in this way, guaranteed the actual availability of the amount.

An evolution of the credit certificate was the *madre fede* and the system of "policies noted in faith". When the depositor needed to make payments for amounts smaller than that for which he had received the "credit certificate", it was possible to ask the bank to issue some "noted in faith policies", subtracting the amounts directly from the original title and creating new orders from there. It was also possible to increase the money referred to by the mother faith, which therefore, between decreases and payments, was transformed into a sort of savings booklet today. In the 18th century, the *notate in fede* system spread to the point of pushing the banks to create a particular and separate accounting system to be kept as a reference for this type of operation.

The main series of the archive, content and characteristics

The Historical Archive of the *Banco di Napoli* is conceptually divided into two large sections: the *Apodissario* and the *Patrimoniale*. Although we commonly speak of the "fondo apodissario" and the patrimonial, this division is theoretical and does not correspond to the classic archival cataloguing. This division is detected transversally in the documentation produced by the various producing entities, from the modern age to almost our contemporary.

By "apodissario", we mean all that material that directly concerns the relationship between the Bank and its customers, which has a demonstrative purpose concerning the position of the Bank relating to its account holders and the operations that they, through banking services, carry out. By "patrimonial," we mean that documentation, much less numerous than the "apodissario", is inherent to the internal management of each institution and its relationships with political power and internal employees. Both types of documentation can provide in-depth testimony on the role of modern-age banks and contemporary-age institutions, both in their relationship with the community of citizens and financial operators, as well as with the ruling houses and the centre of state power.

As regards the writings of the ancient public banks, their central nucleus is constituted precisely by the different series that make up, for each of them, the *apodissario* section.

The fundamental archival units of the *apodissario*, the founding nucleus of the activity of the banks and its immediate trace, are the registers and the *buste di bancali*. The term "bancali" indicates the totality of the securities issued by the banks, from the "credit certificate" mentioned above to the "policies notated in faith". The *buste di bancali* series is present in all the collections and is inventoried analytically by day, sometimes in a summary way, by month. In ancient times, the *buste di bancali* were preserved peculiarly through a system that required them to be skewered, one after the other, along a rope fixed to the ceiling. In this way, the *filza* was born, a unit of archival conservation widespread in Italy but particularly suggestive within the archives of the Neapolitan banks because it was intended to be displayed in a series of columns of documents, hanging directly from the roof of the rooms. From the end of the eighteenth century until 1809, the banks gradually adopted the habit of binding *buste di bancali* in daily registers bound in parchment, abandoning the production and conservation of "book of copies".

In 2020, it was calculated that between registers and envelopes (*buste di bancali*), there are approximately 150,000 archival units. The conservation of this boundless mass of documentation has always been a problem for the banks and all the bodies that have succeeded one another in protecting the archive. Indeed, at the beginning of the twentieth century, proposals were put forward by various institutions for their destruction. Fortunately, these proposals were not taken into consideration. The inventory work led to the progressive abandonment of the original file system to create, in fact, genuinely movable and consultable documentary units. The information contained in the *buste di bancali* is then transcribed into the accounting registers, which, by typology, give rise to an equal number of archival series for each public bank.

The "pandette" is an alphabetical register, ordered by name (in Catalan style), in which every six months or quarterly, all the names of the Bank's account holders were recorded. Next to each name a number, the specific reference to the subject's account in the main ledger.

The "main ledger", updated every six months or quarterly, is a large register in which the bank's position concerning each customer was exposed in a reasonably regular double-entry system. Deposits, cash withdrawals or issuing "credit certificates" can be traced here, and each transaction is accompanied by a date.

The last book of this system of registers, inevitably connected, is the "journal of copy policy". In this last one, the registration reasons, the amounts, present on each bank paid off at the bank were reported and ordered by days. Cash transactions where the recipient of the endorsement on the "credit note" or the *buste di bancali* withdrew the indicated amount in cash are reported in the cash journals. Bank transactions, where the endorsee preferred to have the amount, he benefited from transferred to his account, are reported in the "journal book".

There are other types of archival units and series, albeit smaller. The "accounting registers" mentioned above, starting in 1737 and by the *Banco dei Poveri*, were replicated to create a parallel accounting system dedicated to the *notate fedi*. Even the "orders", single payment orders that had a plurality of beneficiaries, often used for the payment of income on taxes and financial operations, constitute distinct units. The "cash", "income", and "outcome" registers, although kept in different numbers from bank to bank, represented a temporary registration intended then to contribute to the formation of the main ledger. In them the figures issued or received by the bank are noted directly from its accounts and in its name. The patrimonial entries concern, as mentioned, the internal management of the assets of each institution and its relationships with the political power and its employees.

There are registers generically called "estate books" where, in double-entry form, each institution recorded its own active and passive assets, its income or its passive interests and movements of its accounts relating to the functioning of the institution itself (salaries, alms, maintenance, real estate properties).

A progressive specialization of credit activities led the Neapolitan banks to equip themselves with registers called "debtor's ledger", "creditor's ledger", and "third party ledger". These records collected the active and passive positions and the active or passive variations of the same. The "third party ledger" was so called precisely because active or passive income and interest were collected in the Kingdom quarterly.

The non-accounting records were equally widespread, comparable to the current minutes of the boards of directors or general councils. These were the appointments and conclusions of the decisions taken by the governors of the bank concerning the operations of the institution and its staff. Also of a non-accounting nature, but in the form of a letter or copy of the same, are the series of "dispatches and representations", requests and responses exchanged with different governmental authorities regarding the credit and monetary policy of the bank.


M
1763.2
1763.2
G.2
L.
1763.P
1764
G.2
1764
L.M
1770.P
L.C.
1770.P
L.G.
1770.2
G.2
G.P.

Examples of documentation: descriptive information, financial information

Showing some examples of how the documents of the Historical Archive of the Banco di Napoli are able to provide interesting details for any kind of research helps to understand the role that the institutions that generated the documentation had in the daily events of the city of Naples and Southern Italy in general.

Caravaggio and the Radolovich Altarpiece

To appreciate the descriptive capacity of the payment reasons that characterized the endorsements and payment orders on the credit certificates, it is particularly effective to illustrate artistic patronage of particular interest and value for art historians.

In October 1606, Michelangelo Merisi, universally known as Caravaggio, arrived in Naples. One of the most appreciated and controversial painters of his time, destined to enter the pantheon of the greatest Italian artists of all eras, he arrived in the viceregal capital at the end of a hasty escape from Rome, carried out to escape the murder conviction. The first document that testifies to Caravaggio's arrival in Naples is a trace on a "copy-policy journal" of the *Banco di Sant'Eligio*.

On October 6, 1606, a wealthy merchant from the Republic of Ragusa, Nicolò Radolovich, paid Caravaggio the sum of 200 ducats. Nicolò Radolovich had recently elevated his status, purchasing the title of marquis and the city of Polignano in Puglia. Probably driven by the need to underline the change in his condition, the Ragusa patrician commissioned the Lombard painter what appears to be an altarpiece intended for his new feudo. This is the reason for payment transposed on the "copy-policy journal":

To Nicolò Radolovich 200 ducats. And for him to Michel Angelo Caravaggio say for the price of a painting that he has to do and deliver it by next December, 13 and a half palms high and 8 and a half palms wide with the figures, that is, above, the Image of the Madonna with the Child in her arms surrounded by choirs of Angels and below St. Dominic and St. Francis in the middle, St. Nicholas embraced together on the right hand and St. Vitus on the left hand.[4]

The details allow for the list of figures and precise work measurements. The accounting record takes on an even more marked value if one considers that, to date, the work described has not been found, and there are still many hypotheses regarding the outcome of the transaction between the client and Caravaggio. At the moment, reading the reason for payment in the *Banco di Sant'Eligio* journal is the only way to imagine this work by Michelangelo Merisi fully.

The original credit certificate with which the payment was made is, unfortunately, lost due to the gaps that have affected the series of packages and volumes of pallets over time. Journalists, in the act of drawing up their registers, changed the direct discourse of payment orders (*Banco di Sant'Eligio, pay 200 ducats for me to Michelangelo Caravaggio*…) into the indirect form in which the Bank is a neutral 'narrator' of the transaction (*To Nicolò Radolovich 200 ducats and for him –that is to say by his order– to Michelangelo Caravaggio*…).

Lending to the Royal Court

One of the main activities of public banks, and often the only form authorized by their statutes for the investment of their capital, was the loan and advance of capital to the City of Naples and the Royal Court. The banks committed to pay large amounts of capital to the state and received an income guaranteed by tax revenue, indirect taxes or extraordinary taxation. This type of operation can be traced in the patrimonial records.

One of the accounts in the significant ledger of thirds of the Banco dello Spirito Santo, from 1604 to 1620, is registered to the Royal Court above the Customs of Naples. The operations of "purchase of annual revenues" are collected here, that is, the advance of capital in exchange for an annual income, in this case, covered by the income guaranteed by the management of the city customs. The operation had the formal structure of an income purchase. It was, therefore, not explicitly a loan, but the annual income was

4 Historical Archive of the Banco di Napoli (ASBNa), Banco di Sant'Eligio, giornale copiapolizze, matricola 31, 6/10/1606.

specified as a percentage of the capital. The operations had the characteristic of being included in a reverse sale agreement so that anyone who 'sold' their income would have had the possibility of redemption, that is, of repurchasing it by returning the entire capital previously received.

On March 5, 1616, in the debit section of the account above, an entry of 17,000 ducats appeared with the annual income generated indicated next to it, 1,190 ducats equivalent to 7%. The description of the operation is as follows:

> *1616 on March 5, ten seven thousand ducats to the Royal General Treasury for the sale made to our Bank of annual 1190 ducats at 7% above the said Arrendamento with agreement to reverse sell for cautions for notary Giulio Cesare Guadagno on February 19, 1616*[5].

The arrendamento was the practice of alienating the management and collection of a particular tax or fiscal duty in exchange for a fixed sum of money to be collected at three different times of the year and estimated to be slightly lower than the obtainable and expected profit. It was a way for the Court to have immediate availability of money in exchange for a progressive erosion of its collection power. The operation just described generates a flow of income noted in the same register. The operation was widespread and, primarily until the monetary crisis of 1622, allowed the banks to become a prop of enormous importance for the tried finances of the Spanish rulers.

5 Historical Archive of the *Banco di Napoli* (ASBNa), *Banco dello Spirito Santo*, Libro maggiore di terze - patrimoniale, matricola 2.

A City in Arms: The Republican Army in 1648

In the Historical Archive of the *Banco di Napoli*, there are records relating to artistic commissions and high finance, as well as references to significant historical events and political overthrows.

The brief and convulsive revolutionary phase that began with the July 1647 uprisings is historically known as the Masaniello Revolt. Its effects were institutionally and politically more solid after the death of Tommaso Aniello da Amalfi, a fishmonger and the first leader of the uprising. Characters such as Vincenzo D'Andrea, a well-known lawyer and brother of the *Monte dei Poveri*, took command of the independence party that led, until April 1648, to the proclamation and existence of the *Serenissima Repubblica Napoletana*.

It is possible to explore the accounts and attempts at a military organization of this temporary and combative political entity thanks to the writings of the ancient banks.

Vincenzo D'Andrea, as the Republic's general *provveditore*, issued a wide range of payments intended to finance and pay the war apparatus that for eight months opposed the viceregal authority, the Spanish fleet and the aristocratic forces that were openly pro-monarchist.

To show how much information, in terms of names, costs and numbers, that is possible, it is helpful to report an excerpt from these long and detailed payment lists issued in the name of the Republic on behalf of D'Andrea.

> *To the Most Serene Republic of Naples at the disposal of Mr. Vincenzo d'Andrea 543.1 ducats and for him to the undersigned for the undersigned causes, and they are paid by a mandate sent for the said Mr. Vincenzo d'Andrea made on the 22nd of this sent namely:*
>
> *(...)*
>
> *Captain Giovanni de Tomaso 2.3.10 ducats, and for him, in credit of Giuseppe della Tomase lieutenant, was his standard-bearer for the assistance of 27 soldiers on the said day.*
>
> *Master of the field Annibale Brancaccio 25 ducats for the assistance of his person, of which he kept a report at the mint, which remains torn.*
>
> *Angela Grossa 1 ducat for the assistance of her family due to the death of Carlo Barra, her husband.*
>
> *Giuseppe Caporiatasso 3 ducats for six days for his salary as head snow master. Mattia Alfano 1 ducat for the assistance of his family due to the death of Donato Cerullo, her husband.*
>
> *Angela Costantino 1 ducat for the relief of her family due to the death of Francesco Sereno, her husband.*
>
> *Captain Aniello Pizzo 7.3 ducats for the relief of his company of 76 soldiers on the day of 6th of November in which a bulletin made on January 20 was sent to the Bank of the poor, which had no effect and remains torn.*
>
> *Sergeant Major Martio Coppola 8 ducats for his relief on account of his balance, of which he had a bulletin to Carlo Ragno on 2 of this, which remains torn*
>
> *Salvato Viviano 20 ducats on account of the accommodation of the beds placed in the stadiums and what is owed to them.*
>
> *Doctor Giovan Iacovo Carbonello 36 ducats on account of his provision for his efforts with Agostino Vinaccia in treating the wounded of our militia in which the said provision of the same Agostino is included and are for the past month*[6].

6 Historical Archive of the Banco di Napoli (ASBNa), Banco della Pietà, giornale copiapolizze, matricola 376, 27/01/1648.


1788.
P.M
1788
P.P.
1788
Z.M.
1788
Z.E
1788
P.M.

FUNDACIÓN
MUSEO
DE LAS FERIAS
MEDINA DEL CAMPO

Archivo ASR
Simón Ruiz

Simón Ruiz Archive

Inscribed in the UNESCO “Memory of the World”
Register on May 24, 2023

[...] EPS SERVUS SERVORUM

Illius qui pro dominici gregis redemptione in ara crucis immolari non erubuit quamquam post eius mortem et a mortuis resurrectionem preordinatione

admirantes fore debere charitati [...] que ceteras alias virtutes antecellit exercere precepit nos licet immeriti vices in terris gerentes quamvis ex debito pa[...]

pauperes Christi fidelium et peregrinorum quorumlibet etiam ex remotissimis mundi partibus confluentium et in egritudinibus morbi molestiis ac corporis infirmitatibus co[...]

[...]litatis observationem concernentia per eosdem Christifideles facta fuisse dicuntur ut firma perpetuo et illibata persistant libenter cum a nobis petitur officii nostri partes [...]

indulgemus videlicet et peccatorum remissionis pro suarum animarum salute intuitum et paterna charitate apud Deum [...] prout in domino conspicimus salubriter expedire. Sane exhi[...]

[...]talis Abbatis secularis et collegiate ecclesie [...] oppidi ac [...] Consilii Universitatis ac Comitatus et Regimenti dicti oppidi petitio continebat. [...] Simon [...]

commodum [...] sufficientes [...] pauperes et infirmi quocumque morbo laborantes qui aliorum et ex circumvicinis oppidis aliis locis in magno ac frequenti numero [...]

et infirmorum commodum ac beneficium [...] hospitalitatis exercende [...] ac capellam fundandi et dotandi [...] christiana charitate [...]

[...] eodem Didaco qui in dicto oppido tunc abbatie dicte secularis ecclesie [...] obtinet iurisdictionem ordinariam ecclesiasticam [...] sub pactis ac capitulis et conditionibus [...]

[illegible]

The Simón Ruiz Foundation and its documentary archive

In May 2023, the Simón Ruiz Archive joined the select group of the world's most important documentary heritage sites, thanks to its inscription in the UNESCO "Memory of the World Register" for its outstanding universal value. This recognition acknowledged the excellence of a unique documentary collection in Spain, essential for all those who wish to understand the intricacies of European economic history in the 16th and 17th centuries, a time when the Spanish monarchy of Philip II ruled half the world. This international distinction represented, in addition to a great responsibility, recognition of the constant work carried out with these documentary collections over a long period of time, particularly in the last decade, when the Museo de las Ferias Foundation took over their custody, standardized description, and universal dissemination, by express agreement of the Board of Trustees of the Simón Ruiz Foundation, the institution that owns the archive, which I have the honor of chairing.

Simón Ruiz Envito embodies, like few others, the entrepreneurial spirit of the merchant who soon became an international trader and businessman who reached the pinnacle of financial exchange as a contractor for the Spanish Crown. The exceptional economic documentation in his archives demonstrates this, with his trading companies reaching the main European trading centers, including several cities in the New World. Furthermore, Simón Ruiz's creation of a General Hospital in Medina del Campo is an extraordinary act of generosity that continues to this day, as that hospital establishment is still alive today, converted into a charitable foundation. The practically complete preservation of both the commercial and hospital documentation offers us the opportunity to learn firsthand about the daily activities of this figure in his local and distant businesses, as well as the daily events of a long-standing charitable institution he founded, with moments of culminating splendor and, also, with other critical ones that almost brought it to the brink of definitive demise not too far in the last century.

Today, the Simón Ruiz Foundation not only maintains the spirit of care and assistance to the less fortunate envisioned by its founder, but also treasures a historical, artistic, and documentary heritage managed by the Museo de las Ferias Foundation through a dozen cultural projects: preventive conservation, historical research, documentary description, and so on, several of them with the participation of similar institutions in Europe. The publishing project now underway is a prime example of this.

In this year, 2025, when we celebrate the 500th anniversary of Simón Ruiz's birth and also the 25th anniversary of the inauguration of the Museo de las Ferias, it is a great pleasure for me to introduce the following lines, summarizing the history of our archive and the exceptional content this immense legacy holds.

Guzmán Gómez Alonso
Mayor of Medina del Campo and
President of the Simón Ruiz Foundation

The Simón Ruiz Archive

Antonio Sánchez del Barrio
Director of the Museo de las Ferias Foundation – Simón Ruiz Archive

Álvaro Rodríguez Sarmentero
Head of Programming at the Deputy Directorate General of State Archives
Ministry of Culture

Simón Ruiz, a 16th century merchant and businessman

Simón Ruiz Envito (Belorado, 1525 – Medina del Campo, 1597) is widely regarded as the most prominent Spanish businessman of the 16th century. This is largely due to the meticulous preservation of his extensive documentary archive, which is unparalleled in Spain. This archive offers a vast wealth of information on Ruiz Envito's life and professional career in the world of trade and finance during the reign of king Philip II. Furthermore, this remarkable documentation provides a highly accurate representation of the society of his era, as it comprises primary sources of considerable reliability and uniqueness, rather than the more common "*… doctrinal texts or legal documents, in which reality usually appears masked, if not deliberately distorted…*", as Professor Josep Fontana has rightly pointed out (Ruiz Martín, 1990, p. 7).

Simón Ruiz was born in Belorado (Burgos) in 1525 into a family with very old ancestors from Burgos. He settled in Medina del Campo around 1550 as a cloth merchant. His brother Vítores had been established for several years in this city of the great "General Fairs of the Kingdom", which undoubtedly influenced his definitive arrival in this fair enclave. In Medina, Simón Ruiz operated as a wholesaler of imported goods from Nantes and Brittany in France. His other brother, Andrés Ruiz, and the Miranda and de la Presa families, also from Burgos, were engaged in business activities and held a prominent social position. These families were related to the Ruiz Envito family. It is evident that the family and the interweaving of relatives, forming a network of trust, constituted the basis and foundation of the company and were the key to its commercial prosperity. He amassed a considerable fortune from this activity, which allowed him to embark on a second phase of his career. While maintaining his involvement in the commercial world, he also participated in significant financial transactions, including the provision of loans to the Spanish Crown. Until the 1570s, Simón Ruiz had a highly lucrative business relationship with Nantes and Brittany, primarily focused on the trade of linen, cloth, card, and, to a lesser extent, reams of paper. From 1576, however, his commercial interests shifted to the Norman city of Rouen, which was situated between Brittany and the Flemish region. The city's busy river port on the Seine would prove to be a key point in the expansion of the Ruiz Envito family's business in north-west France. From this location, they imported significant quantities of superior lingerie, surpassing the quality of that produced in Brittany. Additionally, they imported seasonal commodities, including salt from the mines of Alava, wheat and wool from Castile, oil from Andalusia, spices from the East and the New World that arrived at the ports of Lisbon and Seville.

Portrait of Simón Ruiz. Circle of Juan Pantoja de la Cruz. Circa 1595.

It is precisely these last two cities that are two of the most important commercial centres, which will attract the attention of our protagonist at different times. The Ruiz Envito family experiences periods of great profitability, but also moments of persistent risk and debt. In both ports, Simón Ruiz had agents or correspondents whose role was to represent the company, organise sales and carry out the orders given from Medina regarding the reception and inspection of goods. In case of unsatisfactory arrival conditions, legal actions were initiated. Simón Ruiz's initial business dealings in Seville can be traced back to the early modern period, with the first major operation he undertook in 1559 in collaboration with the renowned Maluenda family from Burgos. Nevertheless, the most significant commercial transactions in the city occurred towards the end of the sixties, with his immediate successors continuing to engage in commercial activities until at least 1620. A similar situation occurred regarding the port of Lisbon, particularly with respect to the trade of spices from overseas, which was conducted via the "Nao de la China" and the "Galeón de Manila" routes, which also brought in exotic objects that were in great demand. Simón Ruiz typically served as an intermediary in the purchase and sale of spices, pigments, dyes, and luxury goods that arrived in Lisbon. These goods were subsequently exported to various Spanish cities (including Bilbao, Burgos, Segovia, Toledo, and Valencia) and European cities (such as Antwerp, Lyon, and Florence). Over time, these import and export businesses experienced a period of great prosperity, especially from 1580 onwards. This was a period of increased fluidity of business and greater volume of transactions for all the kingdoms under the rule of Philip II, as he was recognised as King of Portugal.

The business activities of Simón Ruiz in the major Italian cities were primarily concentrated in Florence between 1577 and 1586. Additionally, his business interests extended to other Italian cities, including Milan, Rome, Luca, Pisa, Turin, Palermo, and Venice. However, his involvement in these cities was relatively brief and transient. Similarly, he had business connections in Genoa and Piacenza, but these were largely driven by economic pressures from Genoa rather than by his own initiative. Indeed, from the 1570s onwards, Castilian businessmen reacted to the dominance of the Genoese bankers in several ways. These included the acquisition of land, the diversification into the textile industry and, to a greater extent, the involvement in the money market. Nevertheless, their financial activities would never reach the same level of magnitude as those of the prominent Genoese businessmen. As professor Felipe Ruiz observed, this was a conflict between Genoese "*big capitalism*" and Castilian "*small capitalism*" (Ruiz Martin, 1990). The final two decades of the 16th century represent the period of greatest commercial activity in Italy for an already established Simón Ruiz, particularly in the city of Florence, where he assumed the role of financier rather than merchant.

Simón Ruiz's commercial and financial operations in Antwerp, a city renowned for its significant commercial transactions, contributed to his reputation as a prominent businessman during that era. In the city on the Scheldt, Simón Ruiz enjoyed a high level of personal prestige, based on his extensive and well-connected information network. This was the key factor in his being entrusted by major companies in Lyon, Lisbon and Genoa with their business interests in the Flemish capital. In the early days, he played a key role as the necessary intermediary in the large purchases and sales of goods, mainly spices from the overseas trade arriving in Lisbon. However, in time, his main business in Antwerp would be bills of exchange and entries with the Royal Treasury to make payments to the Spanish troops fighting there in the so-called Dutch Revolt, a conflict that undoubtedly marked the course of all subsequent events. In the context of this war, the business was based on the buying and selling of bills of exchange, in which Simón Ruiz always acted as a true master, advancing or delaying payments or collections in different places, thanks to the precise information that his correspondents sent him from there. It is also noteworthy that Simón Ruiz served as a supplier for the Spanish Crown, a role that not only generated considerable profits for him but also elevated his professional status, enabling him to join the select group of prominent financiers operating in major Castilian companies. This period commenced following the critical moment of the suspension of payments in 1575 and continued until 1581, which represents the period of greatest financial activity for our protagonist in terms of his involvement in

Cupboards and trellised space in the sacristy of the church of the General Hospital of Simón Ruiz, where the Simón Ruiz Archive was kept from its creation until 1947.

transactions with the Crown. During this time, he participated in such transactions either through his own companies or on a commission basis.

The final phase of Simón Ruiz's business career began in 1585, when he formed a partnership with his nephew Cosme and his trusted associate Lope de Arziniega. In return for financial contributions, he received a third of the total profits. Subsequently, in 1592, at the age of 67 and experiencing fatigue and illness, he finally entrusted the management of his business to his nephew, establishing a new trading company. From that point until his death on 1 March 1597, Simón Ruiz dedicated himself to the construction of a hospital that would be recognised as a General Hospital of Medina del Campo, uniting the approximately twenty guild hospitals and refuges that were operational at the time. The construction of the building was completed between 1592 and 1619, following the design of the Jesuit friar Juan de Tolosa. The architectural style is clearly influenced by the classicist models of Italian treatises, as well as the architectural archetypes of the Counter-Reformation, particularly those associated with the "Jesuit style". Additionally, the design is strongly influenced by the El Escorial monastery (Sánchez del Barrio, 2000, p. 225-248).

A brief historical overview of the Simón Ruiz Archive

16th - 19th centuries

Following this biographical sketch of our protagonist, we now shall proceed to an examination of his documentary archive. The earliest known references to the protection and conservation of the legacy and deeds of Simón Ruiz, his trading companies and his work as a founder, are those set out in his first codicil of 1592 (ASR, CC, C 219, 118). In this document, he established that "*all the books and deeds relating to all my goods and properties*…" should be collected in the hospital bearing his name. And years afterwards, in his final will and testament, dated April 1, 1596 (ASR, H 21, 20), in clause number 30 he ordered "*that in the sacristy of the aforementioned hospital church should be installed in the thick wall a big chest and that it be secured with iron bars and strong locks…in which were to contain all the deeds*…" Documents pertaining to his patrimony and the foundation of his hospital were to be retained, including wills and codicils of himself and his successors, purchases of real estate, leases, acknowledgements, possessions, surveys, inventories, and so forth. It was stipulated that "*the original documents shall remain within the chest at all times … thus preventing its loss*". The documentary archive, comprising the personal and hospital collections of his legacy, was thus preserved over time in a chest located behind robust iron bars. Regarding the economic documentation of his trading companies and those of his closest relatives, headed by his nephew Cosme (†1618), it is known that a significant portion of it was transferred from Madrid (where these companies were based at the time) to Medina del Campo in September 1632. This transfer was ordered by friar Cosme Ruiz, the son of the aforementioned Cosme, at the request of Simón Ruiz himself. Upon his arrival, an "*Inventory of the papers brought from Madrid on the death of Andrés de Otaola*" was drawn up (ASR, CC, C 214, 7), which can be considered the first inventory of the archive and provides insight into the contents of the documentary collection. From this, we can ascertain that the books and documents transferred, were placed in the sacristy of the hospital church, where the personal and hospital documents were already located. They were situated directly on the opposite wall, in both wardrobes and larders that still exist today. In summary, the initial wardrobe contained four shelves of documents such as lawsuits, bankruptcies, and creditors. Another five shelves were occupied by 64 account books, including daybooks ("manuals"), trade fair ledgers, and trade fair books. In a second wardrobe, a shelf held the deeds, accounts, and lawsuits of Cosme Ruiz Envito, as well as the letters of payment, bills of exchange (and their drafts) of Simón and Cosme Ruiz, and documents related to other family companies. Another shelf contained numerous bundles of commercial letters from Flanders, Genoa, and from within and beyond the Kingdom of Castile. Additionally, records of communications with the Spanish Crown, royal decrees, financial obligations, balance sheets, account closures, and copies of letters sent were found (Ramos González, 2018, p.

"Inventory of the papers brought from Madrid upon the death of Andrés de Otaola", 26 September 1632 (ASR, CC, C 214, 7).

Ynventario de los papeles
questauan en m^a en un apo-
sentto de la casa del may^o ttraidor
despues de la muerte de andres de
otaola queste en el cielo al ar-
cibo del ospital g^l de la villa de m^a
del campo donde estan por orden
y mandado del p^e fraco. y me Ruiz
esc^nto de la Horden de nues-
tra señora del carmen adm^or
~~general~~ del hospital de C

y se començo en la forma sig^e

1 legajo — un legajo que tiene un pleito y de-
manda de doña ana de ruibe mug^r
de lope de la camara en 20 fs

otro contra Stamo centurion
con 226 fojas

otro contra antonio de vega

otro contra doña Joana de ruba de-
neyra y doña ynes de mondaraz
con vernaldino de Valverde

38-39). Additionally, the documents from the office of friar Cosme Ruiz, who can be considered as the primary "saviour" of the archive, are also stored in this room. It is important to note that the preservation of the archive over centuries has been influenced by the sacred nature of the room where the documents were kept. This is evidenced by the fact that the sacristy of the hospital church acted as an "inviolable refuge" for the documents stored there. This circumstance, in combination with the extensive dimensions of the hospital structure – which presented no spatial constraints – and the presence of a continuously active institution to oversee their preservation, leads us to conclude that the entire collection was safeguarded within the hospital between the initial arrival of the documents from Madrid in 1632 and the beginning of the 20th century, effectively remaining untouched by the passage of time.

There are only a few indirect references to the archive in the historical writings of Medina del Campo in the 17th and 18th centuries. This is because the archive was considered to be the active archive of a functioning charitable institution – first the hospital, then the Simón Ruiz Foundation up to the present day – and was known only to those closest to its direct activities. This is illustrated by the case of Julián de Ayllón, prior of the Collegiate Church and an eminent local scholar who lived during the transitional period between the 18th and 19th centuries. Ayllón provided the scholar Antonio Ponz with documentary data on the town and the construction of the hospital for his book *Viaje de España...* (Madrid, 1783, 1st edition). He drew Ponz's attention to the will and codicil of Simón Ruiz, which are preserved in the archive. Ponz transcribed several paragraphs from these documents in his work. Ayllón also published excellent plans of the hospital, which were possibly copied from the original ones, which are now lost. This evidence provides irrefutable proof that both authors consulted the hospital archives and utilised significant documents from the collection, specifically those pertaining to the hospital funds.

In the mid-nineteenth century, a significant event occurred that marked a milestone in the establishment of our archive: in 1864, the General Hospital of Santa María de la Piedad, which was established in 1447 by Bishop Lope de Barrientos, was incorporated into the General Hospital. It was the only one of the city's historic hospitals that was not included yet in the annexation of hospitals in the 16th century. The annexation resulted in the incorporation of the hospital's movable heritage and archive of documents, comprising both historical and administrative records. The archive, at that moment referred to as "downtown", comprised a significant collection of documents, many of which were of a considerably older date than those of the General Hospital.

A review of literature on the history of Medina del Campo in this century reveals no mention of the archive. This was a period of rigorous scrutiny on the part of the successive trustees of the Hospital Foundation, possibly because of the distrust generated by certain government policies. In the context of the Revolutionary Sexennial (1868-1874), during the 1860s, we have the news of a hitherto unpublished, very summary inventory made by the commissioners for the confiscation of historical and artistic assets, due to the Decree of 1 January 1869, issued by the Provisional Government of 1868-1871. Despite being only tasked with registering the assets of the "Cabildo Colegial de la Villa", the official records indicate that on 8 February 1869, the commissioners visited the General Hospital with the intention of inspecting its artistic and documentary assets and creating a concise inventory. Upon reaching the sacristy, the inspectors observed the presence of "*a larder comprising four sections, containing correspondence, financial records, and notes documenting the hospital's expenses. Another such repository contains a multitude of books and notebooks belonging to the founder, detailing his business affairs. Additionally, a chest with three keys contains further books on the same subject, along with nine parchments or vellums, some with lead seals, as well as fifteenth and sixteenth-century bonds, which were left in the chest. In the section designated for archives, they observed the presence of "documents related to financial records, censuses, deeds, and other matters associated with the administration of the institution. The archives also included books of accounts and minutes, as well as … the last will and testament of Simón Ruiz, the founder of the hospital. Additionally, there were nine bulls, concessions, and privileges with lead seals belonging to the Hospital de la Piedad, which were locked in a drawer.*" (AMMC, leg.351, c.427-428). It appears that the inspection and confiscation conducted by the commissioners had a relatively insignificant impact. Consequently, we find ourselves in the 20th century with an archive that is largely unknown, particularly its extensive historical commercial documentation, which was entirely overlooked at the time.

20th century

The initial comprehensive investigation into the fairs and economic history of Medina del Campo was published at the beginning of the 20th century. The 1912 Valladolid publication *Las antiguas ferias de Medina del Campo*, authored by Cristóbal Espejo and Julián Paz, two professional researchers, state librarians and archivists, drew upon a wealth of documentation from the General Archives of Simancas, the Royal Chancellery of Valladolid, and the Municipal Archives of Medina del Campo. However, they failed to acknowledge the extensive collection of documents preserved in the Simón Ruiz Hospital. Furthermore, no reference to this is to be found in the local histories, periodicals, historical bulletins or press articles on the city's past published in those early decades by chroniclers, academics or scientists.

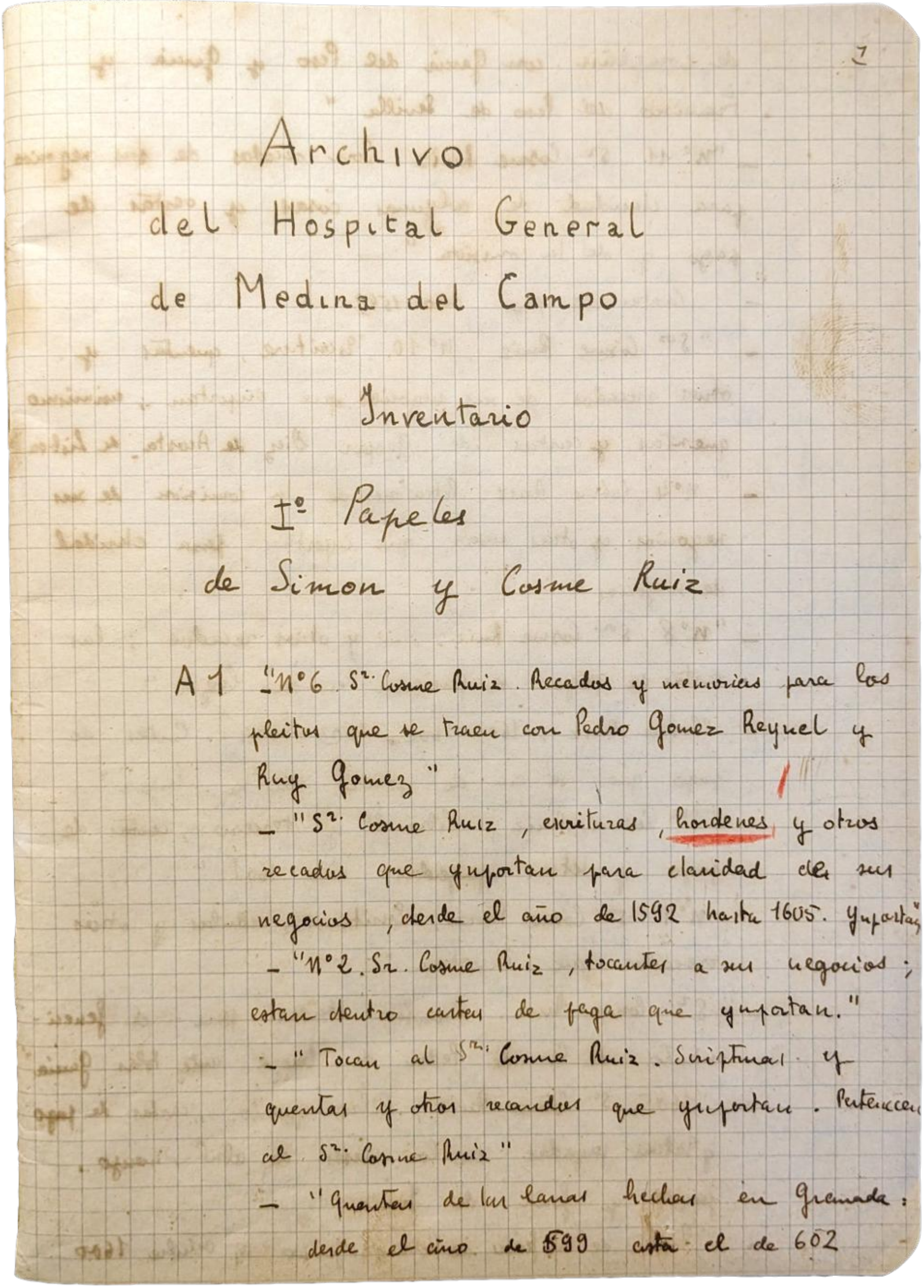
A ministerial inspection of the archives of private institutions in the province of Valladolid, officially entrusted to the archivist Saturnino Rivera Manescau in 1924, marked the first occasion on which the considerable archival value of the commercial legacy of the Simón Ruiz Archive was revealed. This discovery transcended the local and provincial areas, becoming an important discovery for specialists in Spanish economic history, many of whom were foreign nationals. The archivist's report, which outlined the two fundamental collections of the archive –the commercial and the hospital collections of the founder– had a profound impact. During the same decade, it reached the attention of the American historian Earl J. Hamilton, who was engaged in examining various aspects of the economy during the 16th and 17th centuries. Hamilton's interest prompted him to visit the archive and engage the services of the archivist Miguel Bordonau to examine the collections and provide him with photographs of the documents. This new appreciation of the archive's documentation resulted in the inclusion of a bill of exchange in the Simón Ruiz Foundation's own printed memoirs (published in 1926), in which it was described as a valuable and representative document of the charity institution. Three years later, the same bill of exchange was even filmed for the documentary "Valladolid at the Ibero-American Exhibition in Seville, 1929", in which it was recognised as an exceptional piece of documentation worthy of being included in the first moving images of the Simón Ruiz Hospital.

In the 1930s, the publication of Hamilton's book *El tesoro americano y la revolución de los precios en España 1501-1650* (1934), led to a re-evaluation of the documentary collection in scientific and academic circles. However, it also attracted the attention of individuals with less noble intentions, who sought to exploit its value during the turbulent period of the Spanish Civil War. Following the end of the war, two first-hand testimonies from the 1940s provide insight into the status of the archive. The first account is that of the priest and chronicler Gerardo Moraleja, who writes in his Historia de Medina del Campo (composed between 1940 and 1946): *The archive contains a wealth of fascinating documents from the founder, which are yet to be examined and studied to derive valuable economic insights. It is our hope that this will be done in the near future, as unfortunately it has not yet been done. It is commonly believed that bills of exchange were the first financial instruments to be issued, but this is an exaggeration, as they were in use long before Simón Ruiz*" (Moraleja, 1971, p. 497). The second is that of Dr. Leonardo de la Peña Díaz, who held the position of medical director at the General Hospital since 1938. He was a man of energetic character and made meritorious contributions to the field of healthcare. In 1942, he published a booklet entitled *Mi actuación en Medina del Campo durante la guerra (1936-1939) y después de la victoria (28 March 1939 - 31 March 1942).* In this publication, he provides a detailed account of the numerous reforms he implemented in the hospital building during that period, which included the introduction of services that were previously unavailable. He specifies these under the heading "*Archives*", stating that *the interesting documents of the trade house of the founder of the hospital, Simón Ruiz, were completely abandoned in archives in some of the rooms of the hospital and in an outbuilding of the sacristy. Many of them were lying on the floor, and among them were many primitive bills of exchange that were starting to be used in trade at that time. To avoid such an unfortunate occurrence, I appropriated one of the two large bread baskets that the hospital possessed and constructed a suitable room with a mosaic floor and walls painted in tempera, featuring a sackcloth frieze, an optimal lighting system, and furniture that emulated the traditional style, including sidewall shelves and a display case for the most significant documents of the era* (Peña Díaz, 1942, p. 21).

This publication was conceived in response to local controversies that emerged because of the prevailing political situation, which created obstacles for some professional researchers who sought to consult the archive's documentation in Medina del Campo. One notable example is the case of the renowned professor Ramón Carande, who, in the same year, 1942, was unable to gain access to the archive's commercial documents due to the mistrust generated by Dr. de la Peña, potentially influenced by his liberal ideas. Nevertheless, it was Carande himself who first drew the attention of his esteemed colleague Fernand Braudel, the director of the *École des Hautes Études* in Paris, to the importance of the documentary collection. This led to a study being commissioned from one of Braudel's most brilliant students. In February 1947, Henri Lapeyre, who had been recommended for the project, started his research in the archives. He left behind a handwritten notebook, which he himself entitled "*Archivo del Hospital General de Medina del Campo. Inventario*." This inventory is divided into two main sections. The first section comprises the *Papers of Simón and Cosme Ruiz*, while the second section contains the *Papers of the Mayorazgo and the Hospital*. The unpublished document comprises 31 pages and was concluded on 5 June 1947, precisely one month preceding the official publication of the decree issued by the Spanish Ministry of National Education, which ordered the transfer of the documents from the General Hospital to the Historical Archive of the Province and University of Valladolid as a deposit. This date also marks the date of the transfer, which took place on 10 November of the same year.

In 1948, following the relocation of the archive to Valladolid, Lapeyre published his first article on the documentary collection, entitled "*El Archivo de Simón y Cosme Ruiz*" (Lapeyre, 1948, p. 3-13). Furthermore, as an honest and reliable witness to the circumstances, he dedicates several paragraphs to commenting on the vicissitudes. These include the general ignorance that was suffered until recently, Hamilton's initial research and the commissions for his book on the price revolution, published in 1934. Additionally, he discusses the actions of Doctor de la Peña, who made the documents of Simón and Cosme Ruiz de la Peña available and provided the documentary collection with its own space and equipment, without ever assuming responsibility for the professional organisation. Additionally, he alludes to Carande's visits to the archive, the institutional challenges he faced, and the pioneering article he published in 1944, which included transcriptions of merchants' letters (Carande, 1944, p. 13-48). Furthermore, he mentions the insightful guidance he received from Braudel and the support he gained from various key figures in accessing and methodically consulting the documentary collection. It is important to note that upon his arrival, the archive lacked even a basic inventory, which further highlights the challenges he encountered. Subsequently, Lapeyre describes the valuable contents of the archive, noting that they are arranged on shelves and include a display case with a top shelf for the most important documents. This observation confirms that part of the collection still retains its original arrangement. In this way, the text serves as a reference point for the knowledge of the former layout of the documentary collection, as documented in the original inventory of 1632.

During the second half of the 20th century, the documentary legacy stored in the historic building of the University of Valladolid, where the Provincial and University Historical Archives are located, underwent continuous inventory and cataloguing work by archivists and historians of recognised prestige. This resulted in the creation of a collection of documents that are now accessible to researchers. These commendable archival endeavours, undertaken during the third quarter of the 20th century, have been duly recognised in numerous monograph articles, which we will not cite here (Laso, 2009, p. 183-203). On the other hand, the 1950s and 1960s were the decades of the first great diffusion of the archive among specialised professionals. In 1955, Henri Lapeyre published *Une famille de marchands, les Ruiz, Contribution à l'étude du commerce entre la France et l'Espagne au temps de Philippe II*, which is regarded as a landmark text for those engaged in the study of economic history during this period. This was followed by several other publications, including those published by the *École des Hautes Études* of the Centre de Recherches Historiques in Paris, in which they studied and transcribed the letters from the Lisbon archive by José Gentil da Silva (1959-1961, 3 volumes), those from Antwerp by Valentín Vázquez de Prada (1960, 4 volumes) and those from Florence by Felipe Ruiz Martín (1965). Subsequently, the series was concluded with the two comprehensive volumes authored by Eufemio



1

Archivo
del Hospital General
de Medina del Campo

Inventario

1º Papeles
de Simon y Cosme Ruiz

A 1 1º "Nº6 Sr. Cosme Ruiz. Recados y memorias para los pleitos que se traen con Pedro Gomez Reynel y Ruy Gomez"
– "Sr. Cosme Ruiz, escrituras, hordenes y otros recados que ynportan para claridad de sus negocios, desde el año de 1592 hasta 1605. Ynportan"
– "Nº2. Sr. Cosme Ruiz, tocantes a sus negocios; estan dentro cartas de paga que ynportan."
– "Tocan al Sr. Cosme Ruiz. Scripturas y quentas y otros recaudos que ynportan. Pertenecen al Sr. Cosme Ruiz"
– "Quentas de las lanas hechas en Granada: desde el año de 1599 hasta el de 602

"Archive of the General Hospital of Medina del Campo. Inventory", by Henri Lapeyre, 5 June 1947.

Process of document review and digitization of the Simón Ruiz Archive in the archive of the Real Chancillería of Valladolid.

Lorenzo Sanz on *Comercio de España con América …* (1979-1980). These volumes drew upon the Sevillian and American correspondence from the archive as a primary source of information. The articles, comprising approximately thirty entries, which were published by Professor Manuel Basas Fernández in the 1950s and 1960s in the *Boletín de la Institución Fernán González,* are more focused on the life of Simón Ruiz, his family and other Burgos merchants. Other significant studies, in this case focusing on the account books of the archive, include those by José Mª. González Ferrando and Ricardo Rodríguez González. Additionally, there is a vast array of books and articles that utilized these archival collections during the final decades of the 20th century. (For a comprehensive and continually updated bibliography, readers are directed to https://www.museoferias.net/bibliografia-sobre-simon-ruiz/). On the other hand, and within these last decades of the 20th century, it is worth mentioning the documentary exhibition "Simón Ruiz. Un hombre de negocios del siglo XVI" organised by the Provincial and University Historical Archive of Valladolid in 1988 and displayed in Valladolid, Salamanca and Medina del Campo.

21st century

In the present century, the Simón Ruiz Archive has been the subject of interest from several academic institutions and individuals, primarily for the purpose of conducting research at various universities. In 2008, the Junta de Castilla y León and the Provincial Historical Archive published the *Inventory of the Simón Ruiz Archive*. Concurrently, the large-format parchments belonging to this collection were restored at the Centre for the Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage, under the auspices of the Junta.

Since its establishment in 2001, the Museo de las Ferias Foundation has provided sponsorship for several documentary projects utilising the records held within the archive. This period extends until 2013. The most significant of these are the financing of part of the research project "Postal study of the Simón Ruiz Archive" (2002), which resulted in the publication of *El Correo en el Renacimiento Europeo* awarded the "Oro Grande" at the World Philatelic Exhibition (Valencia, 2004). (Further details of this project will be provided later.) Between 2003 and 2007, the digitisation of the bills of exchange collection was undertaken as part of various training

Process of document review and digitization of the Simón Ruiz Archive in the archive of the Real Chancillería of Valladolid.

internships for university graduates. In 2007, the exhibition, accompanied by a catalogue, entitled "Ferias y Finanzas. El mercado del dinero, siglos XVI y XVII", comprises works of art and a selection of commercial documents and account books from the archive. From 2007 to 2009, the project "Computerised Catalogue and Digitisation of the Simón Ruiz Archive" was undertaken with a grant of the Castilla y León Historical Heritage Foundation in collaboration with the University Institute for History "Simancas". This resulted in the digitisation of 43,000 records in 148 boxes. The editorial project was completed in 2008: *Francesco Datini, Jacob Fugger y Simón Ruiz. Los legados histórico-artísticos y documentales de tres grandes hombres de negocios* (Valladolid, 2009), with the participation of the Datini Archive (Prato, Italy) and the Fugger Foundation (Augsburg, Germany). It is also noteworthy that on 26 June 2012, the "Simón Ruiz Chair" was established by the Museo de las Ferias Foundation and the University of Valladolid. This was achieved through a collaboration agreement with the Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes, which aims to create a portal on the history of trade. This portal would draw upon the artistic and documentary collections of the Simón Ruiz Foundation.

A new chapter in the history of the archive began in 2013, when the Board of Trustees of the Simón Ruiz Foundation, the institution that owns the documentary collection, resolved at its meeting on 27 September to consolidate the historical legacy of its property in Medina del Campo. This legacy was previously dispersed and now would be located in a single space equipped with security and air-conditioning measures and with accredited staff to oversee its preservation and management. In this way, all the historical, artistic and documentary heritage that is not located in the dilapidated General Hospital, mainly in its church (i.e. that which is deposited in civil and religious institutions in the province), would be brought together in the premises of the Museo de las Ferias Foundation, thus resolving a situation that has persisted for several decades. This institution formally accepted the official deposit of these historical collections on 5 December of the same year.

The administrative procedures for the return of the archive to Medina del Campo were completed throughout 2014 and 2015. These included the agreement between the Deputy Directorate General of the State Archives of the Spanish Ministry of Culture and the Simón Ruiz Foundation to the

Fair notebooks from the Simón Ruiz Archive in their corresponding folders and final box.

complete digitisation of the set of documents prior to their transfer. As a consequence, the archive has been subjected to a full examination of each document, resulting in the updating of numerous references, the detection of errors related to numbering, location, and chronology, the identification of misplaced or lost documents, the sealing of those that have not been registered, and, most importantly, the placement of these documents in new, standardised, acid-free boxes and bundles. In many cases, these boxes and bundles have been custom-made to fit the varying sizes of the original books and documents, a factor that will have a significant impact on their future conservation. During this period, the data of the new general inventory of the archive –the current one in force– were updated, thus renewing the previous ones from the last century. These were begun in the 1950s by the above-mentioned projects, headed by that of Professor Lapeyre.

The digitisation work was conducted at the Archive of the Royal Chancellery of Valladolid between April 2015 and January 2020. During this period, the documents were transferred on a progressive basis, with five transfers taking place each year. The final results were scheduled for presentation in January 2020. The Museo de las Ferias Foundation is responsible for the day-to-day conservation and management of the archive, as agreed upon in a contract signed on 12 May 2015 between the Simón Ruiz Foundation and the Trade Fair Museum Foundation, both based in Medina del Campo.

In 2016, with the archive already established in Medina del Campo, a specific section of the archive was made accessible on the Foundation's website (https://www.museoferias.net/archivo-simon-ruiz/). Concurrently, with the support of the Provincial Council of Valladolid, the bi-monthly exhibition series "Documents of the Simón Ruiz Archive" was initiated, with the objective of investigating and temporarily exhibiting the most significant original documents from the archive. It is also noteworthy that exhibitions have been held since that time. In 2016, for example, the exhibition entitled "Simón Ruiz, merchant, banker and founder", was held, which constituted the most significant exhibition ever mounted in Spain on a 16th-century businessman. In this exhibition, documents from the archive were displayed together with important historic and artistic works from the main Spanish museums and private collections. A catalogue of the same name was published with

Exhibition "Simón Ruiz Archive. Trade and finance in the time of Philip II" at the Archivo General de las Indias in Seville, February–April 2019.

the participation of the most prominent specialists in the field, and in parallel, an international congress was held under the title "Simón Ruiz and the business world in Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries". The proceedings of this congress were subsequently published by the Simón Ruiz Chair in 2017. In 2018 and 2019, a new exhibition was presented: "Simón Ruiz Archive. Trade and finance in the times of Philip II", which was displayed in two of Spain's most significant archives: the Royal Chancellery of Valladolid and the General Archive of the Indies in Seville. The exhibition displayed a substantial collection of original documents belonging to the Ruiz Envito family, its trading company, and the General Hospital. Additionally, it featured a diverse array of artistic and functional objects from the 16th and 17th centuries, primarily drawn from the historical collections of the Simón Ruiz Foundation. A variety of activities were held in parallel with the exhibitions, including an international symposium at the University of Ghent (Belgium), the participation in the XI Iberian Biennial of Cultural Heritage AR&PA, the publication of several promotional materials, the production of audiovisual content, educational workshops, and so forth. These activities were held in the context of the "European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018", with the support of the Spanish Ministry of Culture and the Junta de Castilla y León.

The Simón Ruiz Archive. Documentary collections and main ongoing projects

The Simón Ruiz Archive is currently comprised of two significant collections: the trading company collection and the General Hospital collection, which was established in 1591. The latter includes the founder's personal and family documents, which constitute a distinct collection. In many instances, the three collections are mutually complementary, as numerous documents contain information that may pertain to more than one of the three aforementioned areas of documentation.

The direct management of the Simón Ruiz Archive by the Museo de las Ferias Foundation has resulted in the initiation of a series of projects, some of a general nature and others more specific. The fundamental objective of these projects is to maintain the conservation of the collections, enhance their description, facilitate public access and promote their general dissemination.

Among the projects of a general nature, the most significant, in addition to the complete digitisation of the Simón Ruiz Archive, is the standardised description and electronic publication of the archive on the Foundation's "Archives Portal". The standardised description is based on previous work on the creation of an electronic database (comprising approximately 85,000 records). Once migrated to another specific archival database, this will facilitate synchronised work according to a classification scheme that is currently under construction. Once fully defined, this will be the key element for the hierarchical and coherent organisation of the funds, series, collections and documents that make up the archive. As a result of this project, the documentation will be accessible via the "Archives Portal", thereby facilitating research by providing free, universal, online public access to the archive's documents. The technical support for this portal is provided by the AtoM platform, which is compatible with the international descriptive standards ISAD (G), ISAAR CPF, ISDF, ISDIAH and meets the descriptive requirements of the International Council on Archives (ICA). The "Archives Portal" was launched on 23 June 2021, becoming the principal vehicle for the disclosure of the documentary legacy that constitutes the archive.

a. The trading house

It is beyond question that the commercial collection of the archive is what makes this legacy truly unique, as no other archive of this type has been preserved in the private Spanish archives of that period. Indeed, the series of documents that it contains are practically non-existent in any other similar archive in Spain.

<u>The account books</u>

The economic fund of the archive comprises a series of 184 account books, including the series of general and fair account books (or "cash books"), which demonstrate the double entry method, whereby a debit is recorded on the left and a credit on the right. These were accompanied by the relevant alphabets, the daybooks (or "manuals") of both types, the draft books and the trade fair notebooks. These three types of books were used to maintain the company's general ac-

Account books from the Simón Ruiz Archive.

counts and the specific accounts for the fairs. In addition to these six types of books, there are also the "fair notebooks", which were utilized for the settlement of bills of exchange. Additionally, there are other "particular" books that, due to their limited number, do not constitute a series in and of themselves. Among these are the "drafts of bills of exchange", the "entry interest distribution notebook", the "auxiliary ledgers of gold coming from Milan", the "brokerage draft books", and so forth. Most of the account books in the archive are bound in parchment bindings, with a few exceptions. The ledgers in particular are decorated with stars. The series of account books span a chronological period from 1551 to 1617 and are regarded by González Ferrando as "*the most significant collection of commercial documents and account books from the sixteenth century currently known in Spain.*" (González Ferrando, 1982, p. 23). The books in question correspond to those belonging to the companies founded by Simón Ruiz, his nephew Cosme, and those founded by Cosme Ruiz himself and Lope de Arciniega. In addition, they include fragmentary books belonging to other merchants, such as those of Pedro Ruiz, Diego de Gauna, Pedro Gómez Reynel and Francisco de San Juan.

The most significant documentary description project of this series of books was conducted between 2016 and 2021. It employed a standardised electronic register and was published in its entirety on the Foundation's "Archives Portal". In the same period, a more specific pioneering project was undertaken under the direction of the musicologist Juan Carlos Asensio, entitled "Musical Documentation in the Simón Ruiz Archive". This project focused on the identification, description, restoration, study and interpretation of the musical fragments of choir books and other liturgical books (breviaries, graduals, missals, etc.) that predate those of the "Nuevo Rezado" (the New Prayers) and that have survived to the present day, forming part of the bindings of some of these account books in the archive. The project reached its conclusion with the exhibition "Pages (un)covered. Restored parchments of the Simón Ruiz Archive", which showcased the restored parchment manuscripts from the 12th to 16th centuries and a post-incunabulum print. The catalogue of the exhibition presents the specific studies of all the medieval music manuscripts.

“Ledger after the death of Simón Ruiz”, 1597-1604 (ASR, CC, L 70).

Cleaning of a fragment of the 12th-century *Breviarum Plenarium* (ASR, CC, P 26); previously, parchment binding of an alphabet book from the ledger of Cosme Ruiz.

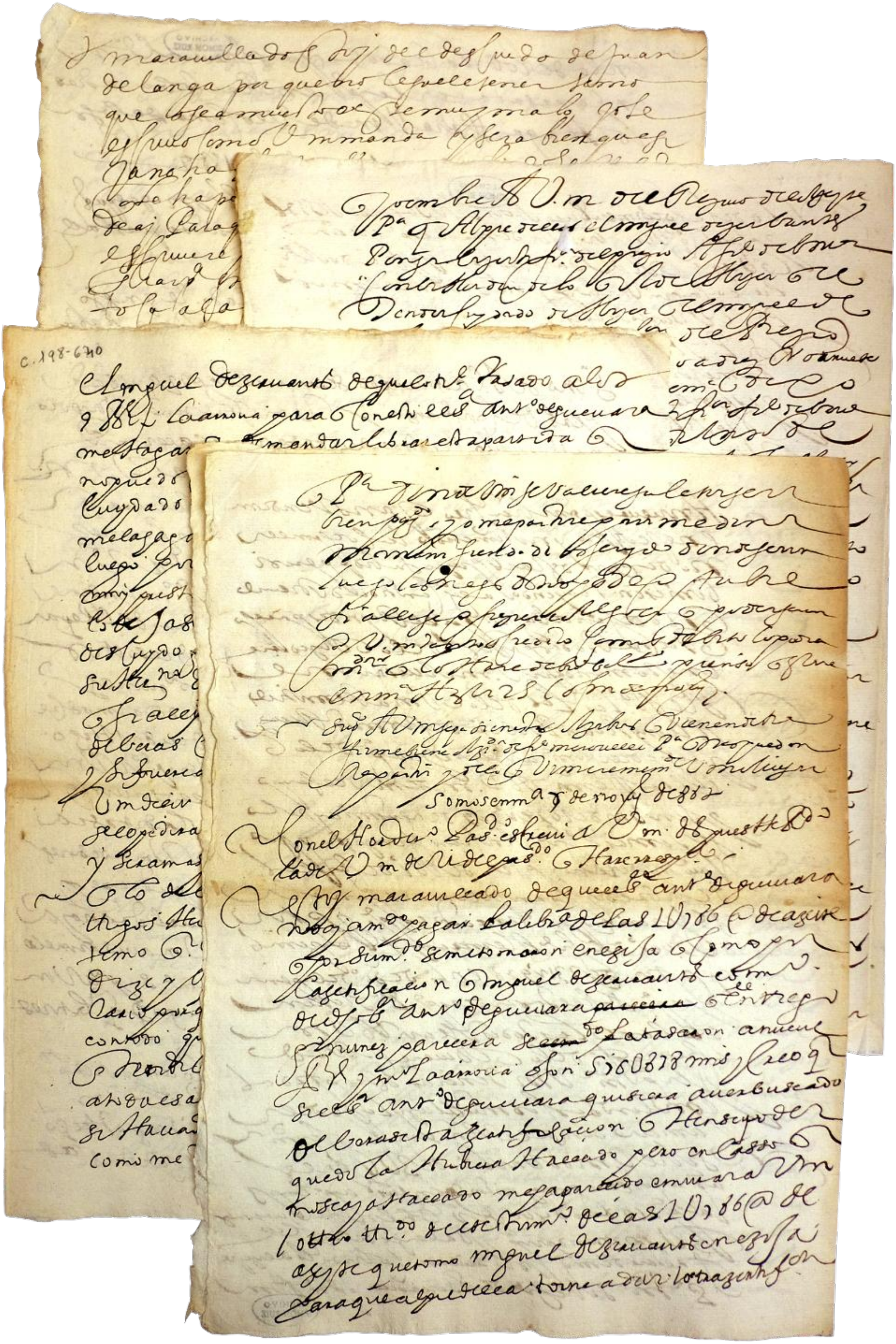
The correspondence

It is beyond question that within the archive of the trading house, the correspondence has attracted the greatest interest from researchers because of the richness of its content and the diverse geographical origin of the material. The archive comprises almost 58,000 letters sent from the major European economic centres of the period, primarily Spanish, French, Portuguese, Flemish, Italian and even South American. This makes it the most important Spanish documentary collection of the second half of the 16th century. Furthermore, the letters are of great value for the study of commercial history, but they also contain a wealth of information of interest in other respects. The collection includes direct references to major historical events, details of different political situations, the personal circumstances of prominent and lesser-known individuals who are mentioned in the letters, various aspects of everyday life, and a long list of news items that allow scholars to embark on a fascinating journey back in time to the era of the fleet to the New World, such as the "Galeón de Manila" or the "Carrera de la India". The archive contains detailed information about several major historical events, including the Battle of Lepanto, the disaster of the Invincible Armada, the never-ending Dutch Revolt, and many other significant occurrences. The data and first-hand testimony included in the archive provide a valuable source of information about all these events. The letters are dated between 1554 and 1624 and are arranged in chronological order, with the city of origin indicated for each. In terms of volume, the correspondence covers the cities of Valladolid (over 15,000), Madrid (almost 10,000), Lisbon (almost 6,000), Burgos (more than 4,000), Bilbao (almost 3,200), Seville and America (more than 3,400), Antwerp (around 3,400), Lyon (more than 2,100), Toledo (over 1,700), Florence (over 1,300), Rome (around 1,200), Nantes (over 1,100), Salamanca and Elvas (around 1,000), Genoa (around 650), Rouen (over 600), Paris (around 500), Piacenza (over 450), Cologne, Milan, Venice and Malta (around 100), etc.

The initial 188 boxes of this documentary series are comprised of letters received and are arranged according to chronological and toponymic criteria. The subsequent 20 boxes contain "minutas", or copies of letters sent to the (inter)national correspondents from Medina del Campo. The more than 200 boxes of classified correspondence represent the culmination of meticulous work conducted between the 1950s and 1970s, involving the identification and registration of these documents. From box 208 onwards, the contents of the remaining hundred or so boxes that make up this series of documents become increasingly dense and complex. In addition to the letters, these boxes contain a wide variety of documents, including legal and commercial documents such as royal decrees, drawing licenses, testimonies of money being drawn, payloads, powers of attorney, letters of obligation, deeds of agreement, protests, bills of exchange, and even documents of

Set of draft books bound in parchment, some of them with musical notations.

Letters sent in 1578 to Simón Ruiz from Cologne and Antwerp with their corresponding wax seals (ASR, CC, C 44).



Letters related to the "oil affair" that took place in Écija, with the food commissioner Miguel de Cervantes. Medina del Campo, 30 January and 13 February 1589 (ASR, CC, C 198, 638-649).

a personal nature. We are therefore moving from a highly precise order according to historicist criteria, in which the documentary typology determines the order and position of each document, to a mixture of typologies. This indicates that there has been no recent intervention over time, leading us to a heterogeneous order. As such, this is likely indicative of how the archive may have been organised originally or during its normal use. However, this remains a circumstance that awaits further detailed study.

It is noteworthy that the first of these recent projects, which was completed several years before the direct management of the archive (between 2001 and 2004), was entitled "The postal service in the correspondence of the Simón Ruiz Archive". This project made use of over 24,000 commercial letters with postal envelopes from fourteen different countries, which served as the documentary source for the project. These handwritten postal markings include postage, prepaid, urgent, hand-delivered, remailed letters, annotated cuts, commercial signs and symbols, and so forth. The results of this project have been published in Fernando Alonso García's book, *El Correo en el Renacimiento Europeo. Estudio postal del Archivo Simón Ruiz (1553-1630)*, which has been awarded the highest international prizes in the field of philatelic history worldwide in recognition of its important results.

Another project that employed the correspondence as a documentary source was the inventory and registration of the stamps and trademarks that were preserved in almost a thousand letters. The process of identification was conducted concurrently with the revision and digitisation of the archive, whereby the various commercial marks, seals and coats of arms preserved in the letters were recorded. These included the identifying signs of the commercial operators who interacted with Simón Ruiz's companies, such as businessmen, merchants, correspondents and others, established in the main European cities. These trademarks were used as a guarantee of authenticity and security. The project reached its conclusion in 2020 with the exhibition, entitled "'Signado de mi marca'. Stamps and trade marks, 16th and 17th centuries", and the publication of the book by Fernando Ramos González, *Sellos y marcas en la correspondencia comercial del Archivo Simón Ruiz*.

Regarding the correspondence, a project for the transcription and critical edition of the commercial letters is also being developed. This project has the objective of building upon the classic works from the 1960s and 1970s published by the *École des Hautes Études* of the *Centre de Recherches Historiques* in Paris. These works included the letters from the Lisbon, Florence and Antwerp archives. The objective of this project is to facilitate collaboration between researchers from diverse academic backgrounds, with the shared aim of transcribing and editing the extensive correspondence contained within the archive. By way of illustration, we are currently engaged in a collaborative project with Ca' Foscari University in Venice. This involves the transcription and linguistic analysis of approximately one hundred letters exchanged with the city of Venice. This project is conducted in accordance with a collaboration agreement with the "Dipartimento di Studi Linguistici e Culturali Comparati". In the period between 2020 and 2028, two "tesi di laurea" have been carried out in the framework of this project. Furthermore, an agreement has been established with the "Fondazione Museo Archivio Storico Banco di Napoli" for the commercial correspondence with the Napolitan banks, which will be conducted between 2024 and 2027.

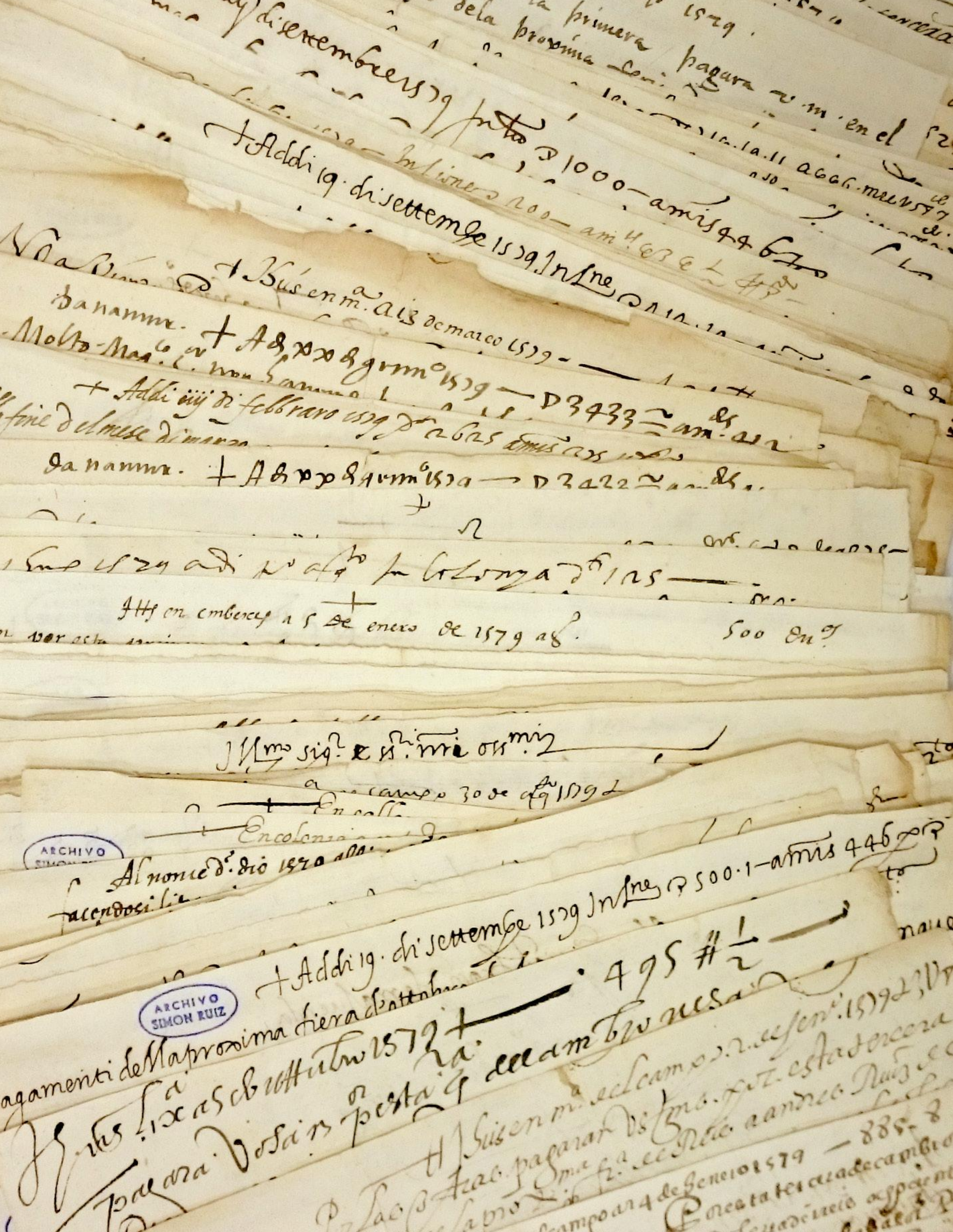
Bills of exchange

A bill of exchange is a commercial document that, in the 16th century, served the dual function of facilitating payment in commercial transactions and as a financial instrument in credit and settlement operations. The general fairs of Medina del Campo were the first in Europe to facilitate the regular trading of bills of exchange and to establish their widespread financial use. These fairs maintained close coordination with other major commercial events, including the Epiphany, Easter, August and All Saints' Fairs in Lyon or

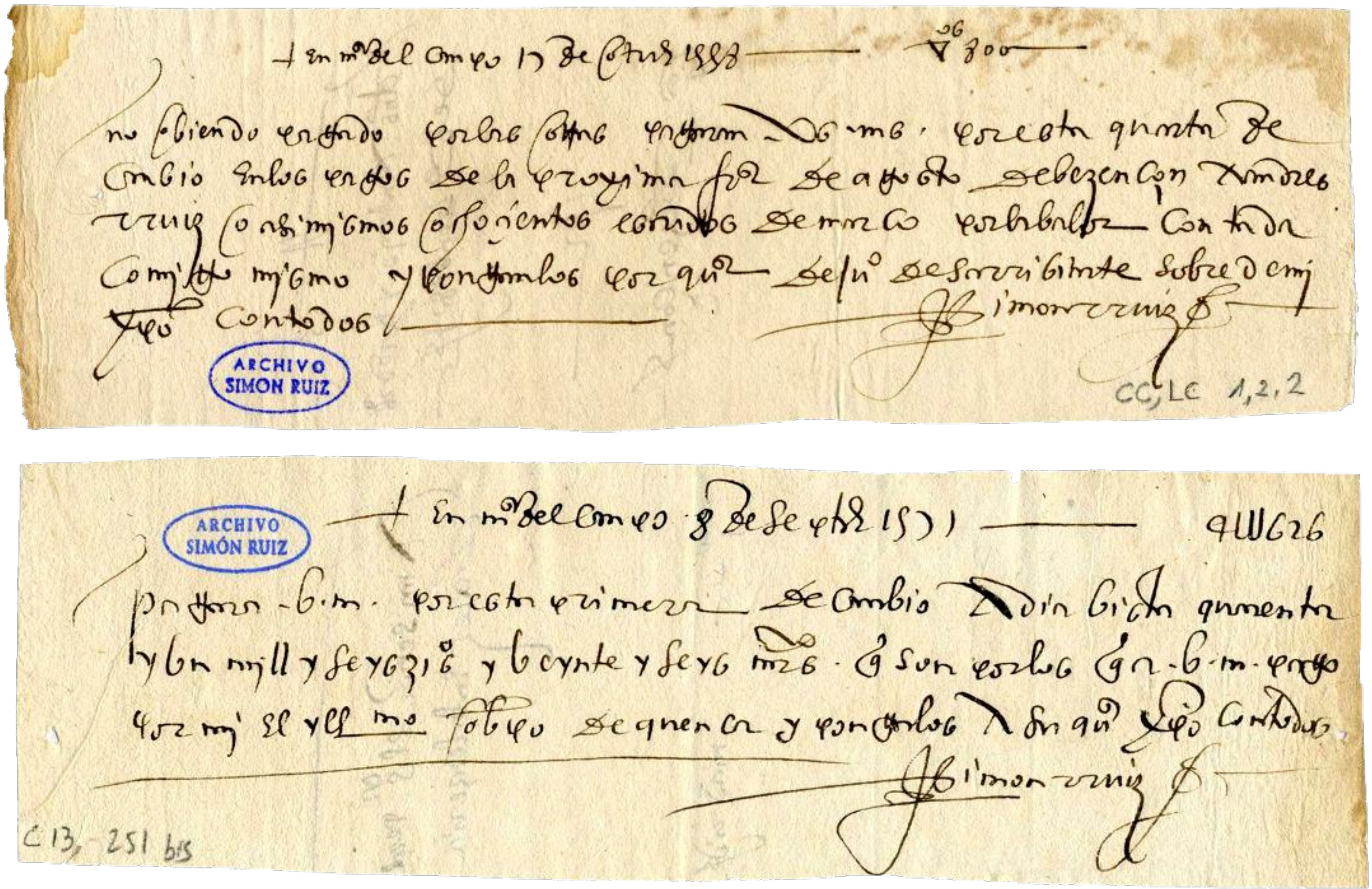
Wax seals: Tomás Balbani. Mons, 1580 (ASR, CC, C 61,143); Giovanni, Francesco, Bartolomeo and Geronimo Balbi. Antwerp, 1592 (ASR, CC, C 155, 23); Hernando de Morales. Lisbon, 1587 (ASR, CC, C 123,143).
Plate seals: Juan de Jugo. Bilbao, 1579 (ASR, CC, C 47, 131); Enriques Liâo. Seville, 1577 (ASR, CC, C 37, 65); Juan de la Haya. Bilbao, 1576 (ASR, CC, C 28, 207).


G B



Addi 19 di settembre 1579
Addi iiij di febbraro 1579
Jhs en emberes a 5 de enero de 1579
Al nome di dio
Addi 19 di settembre 1579
495
ARCHIVO SIMON RUIZ
pagamenti della proxima fiera



Autograph bills of exchange from Simón Ruiz issued in Medina del Campo (ASR, CC, LC, 1, 2, 2 and ASR, C, 13, 251bis).

Besançon, and the Easter fair in Antwerp. The Simón Ruiz Archive, which contains more than 23,000 original bills of exchange issued between 1553 and 1606, provides insight into the significance of credit transactions conducted using bills of exchange. The archive comprises bills of exchange reflecting hundreds of thousands of transactions with 45 European cities. Among these, the following stand out for their size: Antwerp, Lyon, Lisbon, Piacenza, Florence, Rome, Rouen and, of course, Medina del Campo. In his book *Una familia de mercaderes: los Ruiz…*, Henri Lapeyre defines the bill of exchange as follows: "*So much in so few words! The bill of exchange is, in fact, truly a wonder of concision. It represents the most brilliant demonstration of the superiority of the businessman over the lawyer*" (Lapeyre, 1955 [reprinted in 2008], p. 241).

Presently, the bills of exchange are preserved in twelve boxes, constituting a collection of approximately 18,000 originals arranged in bundles. The remaining 5,000 are still preserved, inserted in the letters in which they were originally sent. The standardised description and publication of these documents on the "Archives Portal" is an ongoing project, with the first 6,000 or so having been published for the years 1553-1588.

Commercial documents

In addition to the account books, letters and bills of exchange, there are numerous other commercial documents which, although not forming a specific series, are nevertheless an integral part of the archive, serving as direct testimonies of commercial operations. It is estimated that there are approximately 20,000 documents of this nature, including those relating to the private affairs of commercial enterprises. These include letters of payment, letters of notice, collections, obligations, receipts, vouchers, memoranda, promissory notes, receipts, statements, balance sheets, reports and inventories. Additionally, there are documents of a public nature that require the intervention

Set of bills of exchange from the year 1579.

Listini or currency exchange rates at the fairs of Lyon and Piacenza, 1588 and 1589 (ASR, CC, C 203, 376-386).

of public notaries, or authorised public notaries, to certify the authenticity of the documents, including, but not limited to, wills, contracts, judgments, lawsuits, notarial copies and evidence, enforcement orders, and so forth. In addition, other types of commercial documents that arise from the nature of the business, whether it is a small exchange or a large international transaction, can be traced in the archive. This includes powers of attorney, sureties, discharges, settlements, bonds, quittances, customs notes, money withdrawal licences, ship and master lists, bills of lading, damages expenses, shipments of goods, boarding lists, letters of indemnity, letters of insurance, maritime insurance policies, claims for damages, records of shipwrecks, and so forth.

Several descriptive projects have been carried out with this set of commercial documents, including the cataloguing, study and publication of the collection of "listini", which are small vertical strips of paper showing the different currency exchange rates for financial dealings in the main European cities and fairs of the 16th and 17th centuries. The pre-printed names of the financial centres are accompanied by a space on the right into which the corresponding price could be hand-written. This documentary project, which started in 2017 and was presented in Medina del Campo in 2019, was directed by Professor Claudio Marsilio, who facilitated the in-depth study of the entire collection of 210 original "listini" (one of which is double) which is kept in the archive. The conclusions reached and the images of all the documents have been published in the professor's book, entitled *La colección de "listini" del Archivo Simón Ruiz. Las ferias de cambio de Medina del Campo en el corazón del mercado del dinero europeo (1580-1600).* This book was presented in the Italian cities of Novi Ligure in 2021 and Naples in 2023.

b. The Simón Ruiz General Hospital (including personal and family documentation)

The second major collection in the Simón Ruiz Archive is that of the documentation of the General Hospital of the "Purísima Concepción y San Diego de Alcalá", which represents the most significant patronage work of Simón Ruiz, undertaken during the final years of his life. The collection consists of over 200 boxes of information and approximately 30 parchments. In addition to the documentation of the General Hospital itself, the parchments contain the documentation of hospitals that have been integrated into it throughout its history. Furthermore, they include scattered personal and family documentation of the Ruiz Envito lineage, which ceased to exist in the 18th century.

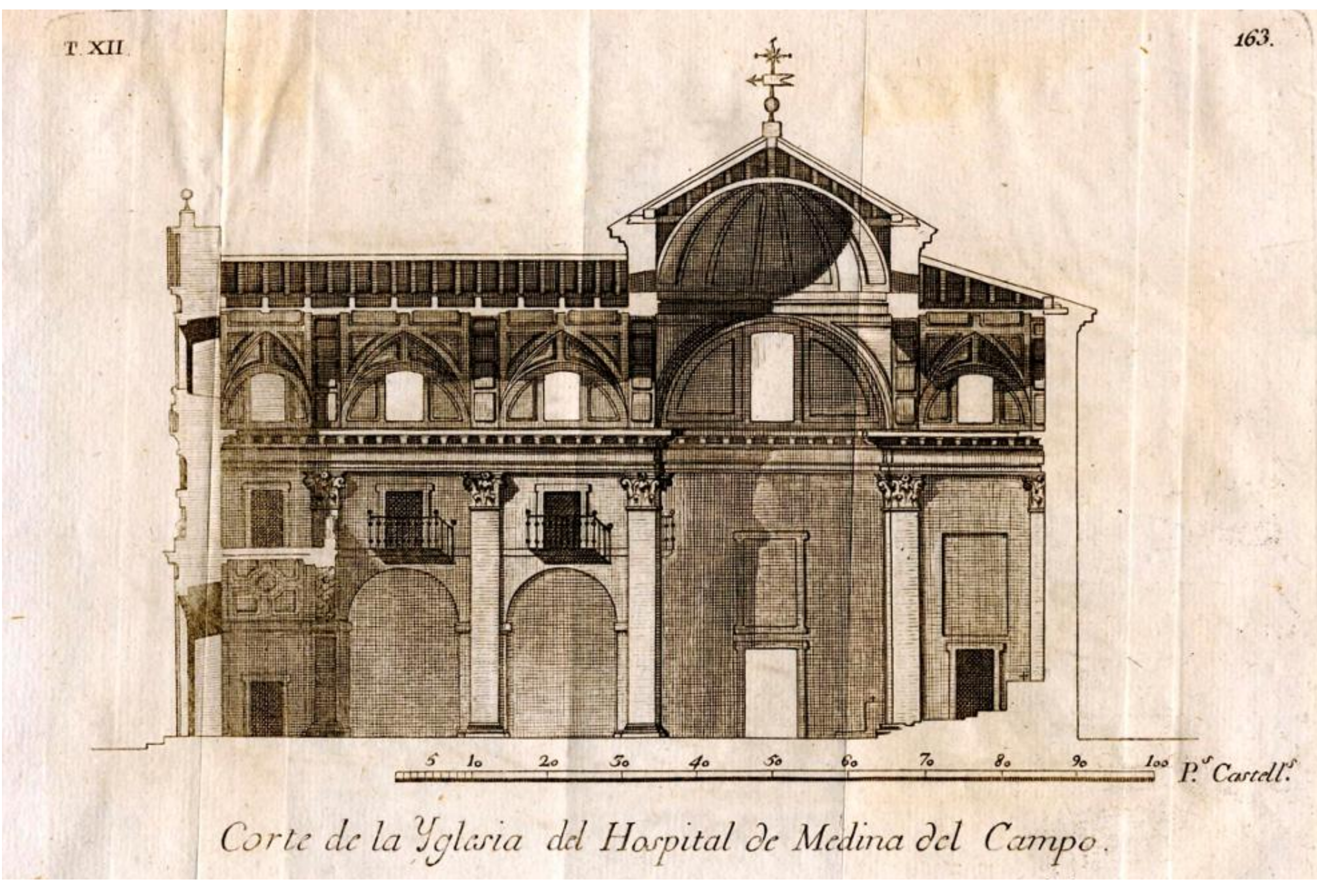
The hospital documentation collection includes the details of the healthcare institution from its foundation in 1591 to the present day. It should be noted that the Simón Ruiz Foundation, the institution that inherited the legacy of this historical figure, continues to exist and is dedicated to charity and healthcare of people with disabilities. The collection thus encompasses the books of the hospitals that were incorporated into the General Hospital at the time of its establishment, the account books of the hospital, the deeds of agreements of the Board of Trustees (its supreme governing body), inventories of goods, censuses and other properties, books of incoming and outgoing patients, hospital accounts, deeds of donations and transfers, and an extensive array of notebooks and papers on a diversely-themed subject matter. Documents of a more personal nature include the wills of the founding family and their descendants, autograph letters, accounts of domestic affairs, inventories of their possessions, … and even a family tree.

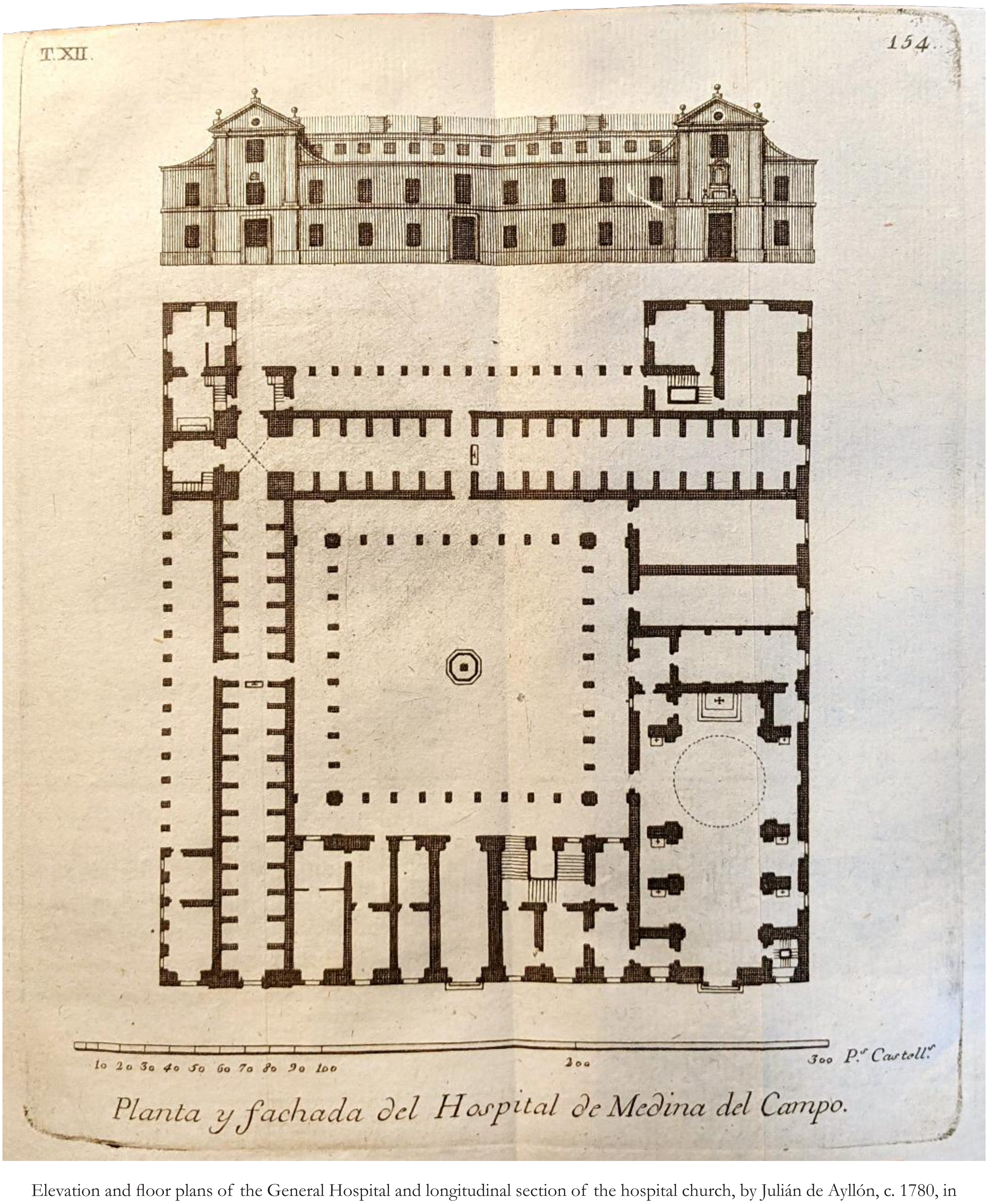
It should be noted that this documentary collection consists of the archives of the "Hospital de Santa María de la Piedad", which was established by Bishop friar Lope de Barrientos in the mid-15th century and subsequently transferred to the General Hospital in the 19th century. The collection comprises significant documents spanning the period from 1454 to 1862, covering the years of its initial foundation and subsequent official cessation, respectively. It includes a range of materials, such as papal bulls, codicils, personal memoirs, inventories of goods, books of entries, financial accounts, records of purchases and sales, donations, and other relevant documents.

Two projects are currently underway, each drawing upon the Simón Ruiz Hospital collection as a primary source of the documentary collection. The first project, entitled "Documentation of the construction of the General Hospital", has the objective of identifying, transcribing, studying and publishing all the documents in the Simón Ruiz Archive and other archives related to the construction of the General Hospital. This will facilitate the acquisition of detailed knowledge of the construction process of this monumental building. The project was initiated in 2016 with the return of the archive to the Foundation. It formed part of the archive's promotion plan for the European Year of Cultural Heritage in 2018 and was presented in 2019 on the 400th anniversary of the completion and inauguration of the General Hospital. Additionally, a commemorative exhibition was held at the Museo de las Ferias Foundation to mark the occasion, featuring original works and documents pertinent to the design of the project, the construction of the building, and the inauguration of the hospital site. The transcription of the construction documents is currently in progress. The other project is focused on the standardised description of the collection of the "Hospital de Santa María de la Piedad" (or Barrientos) for its publication in the Foundation's "Archives Portal". Thus far, grants from the European NextGenerationEU plans, allocated to the Deputy Directorate General for State Archives of the Spanish Ministry of Culture, have enabled the publication of half of the documentation.

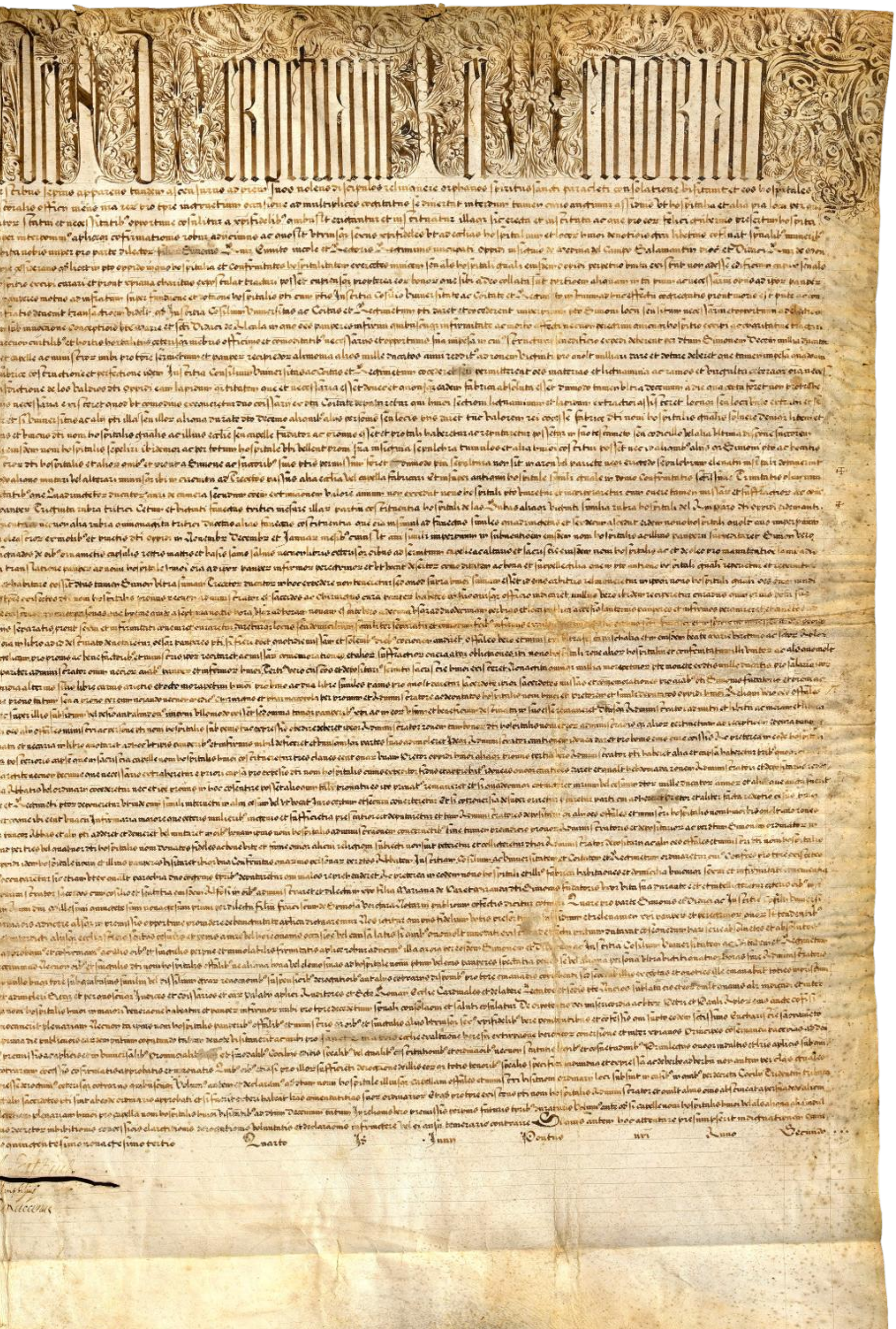
In summary, this an archive whose most knowledgeable expert, Professor Henri Lapeyre, articulated its significance in a concise manner when he posed and subsequently answered the following question: "*What gives the Ruiz Archive such exceptional value? The fact is that this is a unique set of documents of its kind, at least regarding to the sixteenth century in Spain.*" (Lapeyre and Ruiz, 1971, p. XXIV).

Considering the assessment, and in the context of the forthcoming fifth centenary of Simón Ruiz's birth in 2025, it is worth recalling that on 28 December 2017, the archive was designated Asset of Cultural Interest (BIC), thereby conferring upon it the highest level of official protection in Spain. Furthermore, on 24 May 2023, the Simón Ruiz Archive was included by UNESCO in the "Memory of the World Register", considered as World Heritage "*for its exceptional values for the history of humanity*".



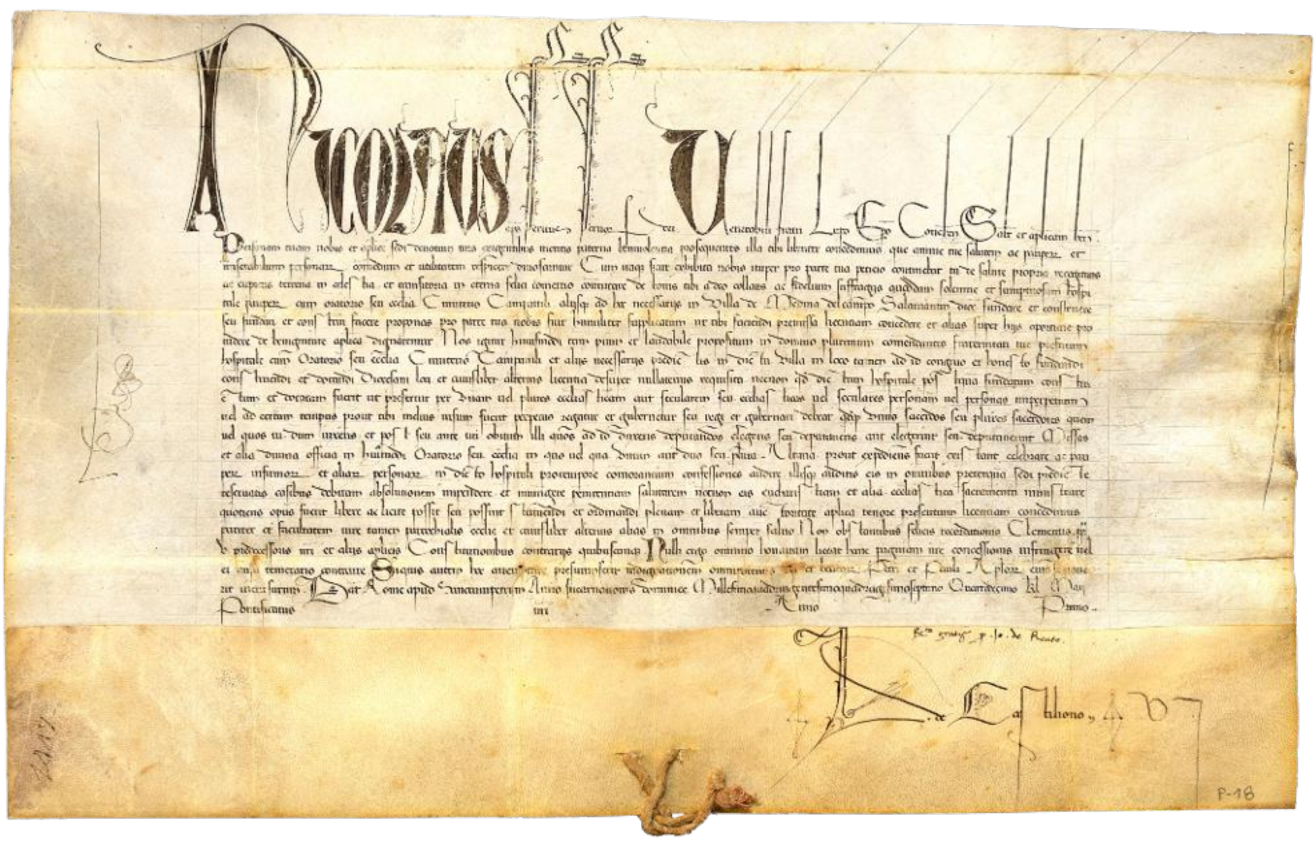


Elevation and floor plans of the General Hospital and longitudinal section of the hospital church, by Julián de Ayllón, c. 1780, in A. Ponz, Viage de España..., 1781 (probably based on the original plans, now lost).



Bull of Clement VIII which confirms the foundation of the General Hospital (Rome, 10 July 1593) (ASR, P 9).

The *La Piedad Hospital* or Bishop Barrientos. Photograph by Honorio Román, 1904.



Bull creating the Hospital of Our Lady of Mercy or Bishop Barrientos (Rome, 18 April 1447) (ASR, P 18).

Praying sculpture in alabaster of Bishop Lope de Barrientos, Egas Cueman, circa 1447-1455.

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(The acronyms ASR and AMMC correspond, respectively, to Simón Ruiz Archive and Municipal Archive of Medina del Campo).

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