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'Tous mes livres de langues estrangeres': het oosterse legaat van Josephus Justus Scaliger in de Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden

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Citation

Ommen, K. van. (2020, July 2). *'Tous mes livres de langues estrangeres': het oosterse legaat van Josephus Justus Scaliger in de Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/123225>

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Cover Page



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Issue Date: 2020-07-02

English Summary

In 1593 the eminent scholar Josephus Justus Scaliger (1540-1609) arrived in Leiden to accept the position as honorary professor in Latin language, antiquities and history. Scaliger had taken a part of his library, including many Oriental books and manuscripts, with him to Leiden. Scaliger started collecting these Oriental books during the Wars of Religion in the 1570s while he was forced to constantly move between a number of castles and strongholds in the southwest of France. Under these severe circumstances Scaliger managed to collect Hebrew, Ethiopic and Arabic books by employing his network of scholarly and secular contacts, amongst whom were a number of high ranking and loyal friends in Paris. The patronage of Louis Chasteigner de la Roche-Posay, seigneur d'Abain (1535-1595) was also crucial for Scaliger in providing financial support to acquire rare and precious books. Scaliger needed these books for his studies on chronology, in which field of research he was involved deeply at the time. At the time Scaliger decided to accept the position at Leiden University he probably knew he would not find these rare books in the library of the university, nor amongst the private libraries of the Leiden professors. Not only the coming of Scaliger to Leiden, but also the coming of his Oriental library did evidently have meaning for the future course of the university and scholarship in the Low Countries. While staying in Leiden Scaliger continued the collecting of Oriental and Western books by exploiting his network in France and with the help of new acquaintances that he met in the Dutch Republic. Amongst them were the scholarly printer Franciscus I Raphelengius (1539-1597) and the merchant Daniël van der Meulen (1554-1600). A number of Scaliger's students travelled all over Europe carrying messages, lists of desiderata and books from and to Scaliger.

In 1609 Scaliger bequeathed by testament the part of his library to Leiden university that consisted of '[...] tous mes livres de langues estrangeres, Hebraïcs, Syriens, Arabics, Aethiopiens, lesquels livres sont contenus dans le Catalogue que j'ay adiousté a la copie latine de ce mien testament [...]'. The governors of the university acknowledged the importance of this bequest, immediately recognized the potential of this collection of rare printed books and manuscripts and realized that this collection could make a substantial difference in acquiring a prominent position amongst the other European universities that were competing for scholarly supremacy during the seventeenth century. The governors stressed the importance of compiling a catalogue of the bequest and ordered librarian Daniel Heinsius (1580-1655) to start with this task immediately. Heinsius however seemed to have encountered serious problems in producing accurate title descriptions of the books and was more interested in presenting the collection as a promotional entity in the *Arca Scaligerana*, the ornamental cupboard in which the bequest was stored. The doors to this *Arca* were kept closed most of the time and access to the books within was only possible with Heinsius' personal consent, thus keeping strict control over the bequest of Scaliger. The attitude of Heinsius was overall in line with the wish that Scaliger had expressed in his Latin testament of 1607 that the manuscripts should not circulate amongst the scholarly community and that the manuscripts in his legacy were not to be published, apart from a few exceptions that Scaliger had specifically mentioned. The *Arca* is depicted in the foreground of the famous engraving of Leiden University Library in 1610, published by Andreas Cloucq. The engraving is by Willem van Swanenburg (1581-1612) after a drawing by Jan Cornelisz. van 't Woudt (Woudanus; ca. 1570-1615).

Only in 1612, and after several rebukes by the governors of the university, did Heinsius produce a library catalogue in which Scaliger's bequest was presented as an entity for the first time: the *Catalogus librorum Bibliothecae Lugdunensis. Praefixa est Danielis Heinsii Bibliothecarii [...] oratio*, printed by Elsevier in Leiden in 1612. This catalogue holds the first attempt of Heinsius to describe the legacy of Scaliger as a separate collection and is essentially a work of homage. This catalogue provides only basic bibliographic information of 127 printed books and 48 manuscripts from Scaliger's bequest. In the introduction to the catalogue Heinsius praised the library as an important, if not the most important, centre of learning in Europe. The legacy of Scaliger contributed to this claim, but the question arises in what way the library of Leiden University was special in comparison with the oriental holdings of other libraries in Europe, for instance the Bodleian Library in Oxford. And how and to what degree did the oriental books from Scaliger's library support to this claim?

In the subsequent library catalogues of 1623 and 1640, both compiled by Heinsius, basically nothing changed in the description of Scaliger's oriental legacy. The total number of 173 printed books and manuscripts is only increased by sixteen new descriptions of manuscripts in the catalogue of 1640, totaling the bequest on 190 items. Only in the 1674 library catalogue, compiled by librarian Frederik Spanheim jr. (1632-1701), Scaliger's bequest increases to 212 items. After a number of 'duplicates' were sold and some items seemed to be lost, the total of Scaliger's bequest reaches 194 items in the 1716 library catalogue. As the oriental and Western manuscripts from Scaliger's bequest have already been described extensively, this study focuses solely on the reconstruction of the oriental printed books from the bequest.

It is striking that from the moment Scaliger's books were shipped from the Pieterskerkgracht and were taken to the library of the university at the Rapenburg up to date it has hitherto been unclear how extensive the bequest actually was and which books were actually part of the legacy. The codicil that Scaliger compiled as inventory is lost, which means that an important source cannot be consulted at first hand. It is not even clear whether Scaliger ever made a complete and useful overview of his collection. The other contemporary sources that have been handed down to us, such as the list of Vulcanius, provide an unclear and incomplete picture of the legacy. In this study I aim to trace the 'development' of the collection through the printed library catalogues. The image that emerges from this is also variable and in some cases even chaotic. By reconstructing Scaliger's oriental legacy through the library catalogues from the period 1612-1716, Scaliger's correspondence and other sources I compiled a separate catalogue containing 189 separate descriptions of oriental printed books that were originally part of Scaliger's bequest in 1609.

At the end of the sixteenth century the emphasis of the oriental languages shifted from Hebrew to other languages of the Orient, mainly Arabic. This 'second wave' of interest in Arabic was the most significant aspect of early-seventeenth-century scientific and scholarly thought. If we compare Scaliger's oriental library with other contemporary oriental collections, it becomes evident that Scaliger's library holds a larger number of Arabic books and manuscripts than most of the collections of his European contemporaries. Scaliger's oriental holdings also stands out in the number of Hebrew incunabula, reflecting Scaliger's interest in the original sources, and the number of Hebrew books on subjects beyond the most commonly used grammars, dictionaries, bibles and theological commentaries. In his collection we find Hebrew books on, among others, history, philosophy and medicine. This

reflects Scaliger's in-depth interest in, and knowledge of, the history, customs and languages of the people of the orient.

