HOMES: LOOKING BACK
TWO BRUGES HUMANISTS: VULCANIUS AND CASTELIUS. GOOD FRIENDS OR MERE ACQUAINTANCES?*

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The Leiden professor Bonaventura Vulcanius is well known in the world of sixteenth-century scholarship. This is not the case with the humanist Joannes Castelius, who, like Vulcanius, originated from Bruges. Their relationship is an intriguing question, though. Were these two Flemings good friends or were they merely acquaintances? Obviously, both scholars were well aware of each other’s existence. Their relationship may be judged on the basis of the following indications: firstly, there is Castelius’ inscription in Vulcanius’ *Album amicorum*, written in Bruges on 23 March 1579 when Vulcanius paid him a visit. Secondly, there is the Vulcanius manuscript in the University Library Leiden containing the Theocritus translations by Castelius. It bears a shelf-mark that shows a direct connection between the two humanists, namely: Cod. Vulc. 92 G II.1 Thirdly, there is the fact that Vulcanius owned the *Historie van B. Cornelis* (History of Friar Cornelius), as appears from his auction-catalogue of 1610. This hilarious prose satire contains major contributions by Castelius as well as many details about his personal life during the years 1566–68. The book is also well provided with particulars on all sorts of Bruges personalities, especially from humanist circles. It almost goes without saying that Vulcanius possessed a copy of this book.

Moreover, one will note some indirect connections between these two humanists from the Bruges circle. They were, for instance, both scholars of Greek. Castelius translated Theocritus as well as Hesiod into Latin, but his major feat was his work on the *Anthologia Planudea*. For decades he must have been gathering existing translations in Latin, urging others to make new translations and translating many epigrams himself. We might therefore expect Vulcanius to be interested in Castelius’ scholarly work. Another indirect connection between them is that they both possessed manuscripts of Georgius Cassander

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1 The Theocritus translations are to be found on fol. 23–39.