BN Paris Rés. Z 2243: An Annotated Copy of Grotius’ Epistolae ad Gallos (1648)

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Such was the reputation of the learned Dutch jurist, statesman and diplomat Hugo Grotius that even his private correspondence was deemed fit for an international reading public. A few years after his death an edition of Grotius’ letters to French politicians and scholars saw the light: in 1648 Claude Sarrau, counsellor of the Paris Parliament, instigated the publication of the Epistolae ad Gallos. The full title of the edition reads: Hugonis Grotii Epistolae ad Gallos, Nunc primum editae. Lugd. Batav. Ex Officina Elzeviriorum. MDCXLVIII. [XVI], 501 pp., 12°: *6 (A-X12) (X12 blank). The letter of dedication (†2), dated 1 March 1648, was signed by the printers Bonaventura and Abraham Elzevier. The notice to the reader (*2–4), dated 14 February 1648 (XVII Kalendas Martias 1648), bears no name, but was in all probability written by Claude Sarrau.

That the booklet sold reasonably well can be deduced from the fact that after a year or two an improved and enlarged edition appeared.2 There was, however, no immediate reaction to the editor’s fervent appeal for other parts of Grotius’ correspondence to be flushed out and Grotius’ letters written to friends in the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, England, Italy and elsewhere,3 to be published. In subsequent years only a relatively small number of letters, specifically those exchanged with Matthias Bernegger from Stras-

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1 A. Willems, Les Elzevier, Brussels etc. 1880, no. 639; J. ter Meulen and P.J.J. Diermanse, Bibliographie des écrits imprimés de Hugo Grotius, The Hague 1950 (hereafter cited as BG), no. 1213. On the edition see also Marquardi Gudii ... Epistolae ... et Claudii Sarravii ... Epistolae ... curante Petro Burmanno, Utrecht 1697, p. 196 (Sarrau to V. Fabricius, 17 December 1648) and p. 267 (Sarrau to Cl. Salmasius, undated).
2 A. Willems, Les Elzevier, no. 682; BG no. 1214 (Leiden 1650). Other editions appeared in Leipzig 1674 (BG no. 1215) and Leipzig–Frankfort am Main 1684 (BG no. 1216).
3 BG no. 1213, p. *4v: ‘Quemadmodum autem has [literas] ad Gallos iam habes meo beneficio, si vicissim alicui, Grotiani nominis et bonarum rerum studioso libeat quas ad Belgas, Germanos, Suecos, Danos, Anglos, Italos alicove scripsit fere infinitas, investigare nec litteratis invidere, ingens bonae frugis et nobis, plurimas ex diversis Europae
bourg and Israel Jasky from Danzig were printed. Eventually, in 1687 a voluminous collection of Grotius’ Latin letters was published in the *Epistolae quotquot reperiri potuerunt*, a work which, according to the title, aimed at an integral publication.

The publication of the *Epistolae ad Gallos* is not exceptional. Particularly in the case of a famous humanist scholar who had avoided publishing his own letters, a posthumous publication was not long in coming. By publishing the letters of a colleague who had recently died, humanist scholars of the seventeenth century gave expression to their esteem for a life passed in the service of knowledge and erudition. However, the publication of letters often involved serious problems on account of the many confidential remarks which did not brook distribution outside a small circle of insiders. The editors therefore felt obliged to censor the letters carefully: without further comment in most cases they expunged whole passages or obscured controversial remarks by replacing names by asterisks. This last procedure roused the curiosity of the readers and before long lists of solutions came into circulation. For example Claude Sarrau, editor of Grotius’ letters, as well as his friend Johannes Fredericus Gronovius, drew up lists of addenda to the *Epistolae* of Isaac Casaubon, which had been subjected to heavy editing. Such lists of addenda may sometimes have been the result of pure guesswork, but they were also based on the knowledge of original manuscript sources.

Sometimes explanations of lacunae in editions of letters even appeared in print as separate lists, sometimes the additions and explanations were entered in the printed version itself. In the National Library in Paris there is a copy of the first edition of the *Epistolae ad Gallos* in which most of the gaps have been filled in. The shelf-number of this copy is BN Rés. Z 2243. The binding bears

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4 *BG* nos. 1217–1219.
5 *BG* no. 1210.
8 See *BG* no. 1211, *Clavis epistolarum Hugonis Grotii. Nunc primum edita* [1763]. This privately printed booklet gives many additions and corrections of the text in the *Epistolae quotquot reperiri potuerunt*.
9 *Catalogue général des livres imprimés de la Bibliothèque Nationale* 64, Paris 1916, Col. 1024, no. 52: Rés. Z 2243, ‘Reliure aux armes de Dupuy. – Note ms. du même à la fin.’ In the Parisian copy Z 2243 the pages [*5–6*] contain the *Catalogus eorum quibus*