Research Notes

De iure belli ac pacis, the Copy of Christoph Besold (1577–1638)

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In a recent article on Grotius’s De iure belli ac pacis Henk Nellen gave a survey of the fifty copies of the first edition of this work preserved in several public libraries.¹ One of these copies is kept in the university library of Salzburg which according to Nellen belongs to the first imprint of the first edition of 1625.² The three authors visited the library in the summer of 2013 and what follows is an account of this joint inspection.

² Nellen, Grotius’s memory honoured, p. 5 n. 20; Nellen, Grotiana 2012, p. 5, n. 20.
The copy in Salzburg has a handwritten *ex libris* of Christoph Besold (1577-1638) and this copy was purchased with the whole of Besold’s library by the university of Salzburg in 1649 from his estate. The *ex libris* can be found on the page before the title page and consists in his name and the letters ATS + CTC, *Abrenuntio tibi Satana + coniugor tibi, Christe*. Next to this the year 1628 is written, apparently the year in which Besold acquired the copy. The whereabouts of the copy between 1625 and 1628 are unknown. Contrary to the majority of the books which are bound in reused parchment Besold’s copy of *De iure belli ac pacis* is bound in plain parchment.

Ter Meulen & Diermanse identified at least three different imprints of the first edition which are illustrated in Nellen’s article by several illustrations of the unequal pages. Grotius himself indicates in one of his letters that the book was printed on three different presses. On each of them most probably a different part of the book was printed; this can be seen at p. 506 which is followed by p. 533 as a consequence of an incorrect estimation by the printer. There was indeed a huge time pressure: the book had to be sent to the important Frankfurter Buchmesse in the spring of 1625. During the printing process Grotius continued to add corrections and even major changes in the text which has as consequence that the imprints of the first edition show considerable, even essential differences. Besides copies of the first, second and third imprint there are also copies with parts of the different imprints. Besold’s copy turned out to be special: the title page totally in black ink corresponds with the first imprint, just as the last page which was printed in the type of the first imprint, with the typical handwritten ‘Ggggg’ at the bottom which indicates the beginning of a new quire. The great majority of Besold’s copy seems to consist of quires of the third imprint. Through the use of quires of the first and the third imprint Besold’s copy suffers from serious mistakes. At the end of p. 784 e.g. an important part of the text is missing due to changes in the layout of the different imprints: III, 25, 3, 2 ends with *imitando*; III, 25, 3, 3 is missing altogether and III, 25, 3, 4 begins with *minus valent*; III, 25, 3, 5 has two mistakes in the Greek: *δεξιτέον* instead of *διεξιτέον* and *πολέμω* for *πολέμῳ*. The incorrect

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7 Nellen *Grotius’s memory honoured* 2012, ill. 4 (p. 785, *BG* 565 l).