On 5 February 1567 the schout and municipal authorities of Utrecht informed Margaret of Parma that ‘recently here’ some bundles of books had been seized belonging to Gelis van Bathman, ‘merchant and burgher of Zwolle’. During the search the schout had found ‘mixed in with many good books’ some works by Calvin, Brenz, Melanchthon ‘and the like’. An inventory had therefore been drawn up by the Utrecht notary public Johannes Thin, and this was sent with the letter. The question was, what should be done with the books?

The inventory, now in the State Archives at Brussels, under Papiers d’Etat et de l’Audience, No. 331, fo. 113r–117v., is published here with explanatory notes. It is an important document because it gives an insight into what Van Bathman was carrying with him, and hence into the sort of books he regarded as potentially profitable. In the second part of this article, I have also analysed its contents. Margaret, Regent of the Netherlands, reacted to the letter with instructions that the good books be returned and the bad ones burnt. So what did the owner get back?

Finally I review what information it has been possible to find concerning the person of Gelis van Bathman.

**INTRODUCTION**

The following publication of the inventory of the books Van Bathman was carrying with him when he was arrested needs to be prefaced with some observations.

It is my view that there would be little point in simply printing the list with no explanation. Therefore, in imitation of Chr. Sepp, Verboten Lectuur. Een drietal Indices Librorum Prohibitorum (Leiden 1889), I have given all the authors, without exception, a brief biographical note. This is essential if one is to gain some sort of insight into the significance of the stocks Van Bathman was carrying. The information contained in the explanatory notes has been taken from works which were immediately to hand. As soon as I found a name, I looked no further: the intention is simply to point the way to those who desire to go further.
Where the biographical details are based on widely known and generally available works of reference the source is not given.

The same broad principles underly the manner in which the titles are reproduced. They have been taken word for word from the places indicated, just as they appear there. It would scarcely have been feasible, and would have meant excessive material costs and a colossal expenditure of time and energy, to give first-hand descriptions of all the items, some of which are extremely rare. For this reason I have personally only examined a few of the books. Here again the rule was that as soon as a title had been found, no further attempts were made to find other editions or copies. Searching was sometimes made difficult anyway, partly due to the lack of bibliographies or catalogues, and on many occasions I found myself obliged to make demands on the helpfulness of the information services at libraries and institutes abroad: I am sincerely grateful to them all for their willingness to provide me with information.

It should be noted that the numbering of the titles is mine. Abbreviations in the manuscript have been expanded, as have those in the printed titles of the books. Since this is a list of trading stock and I wanted to keep to a standard for the year of publication, I have generally taken those editions closest to 1567.

The following abbreviations have been used:


AUL = Amsterdam University Library.


BRL = Brussels, Royal Library.

DBI = *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Roma 1960–).


GPB = *Gesamtkatalog der Preussischen Bibliotheken* etc. (Berlin 1931–).


HKB = The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek.


LUL = Leiden University Library.

NDB = *Neue Deutische Biographie*. Herausgegeben von der Historischen Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin, [1953–]).