

# Varia bibliographica

## THE SMALLEST FORMAT REINSTATED

In the early manuals for typographers such as format books and printers' manuals the book formats run from folio to centesimo-vigesimo-octavo, i.e. in-128°. Of course, a sheet of this minuscule format cannot be folded to make a single gathering but is cut into parts which then make up the same number of successive gatherings in the book. In fact, however, when it comes to in-128° (a total of 256 pp.) the manuals always give the order for half-sheet imposition, the pages for the inner and outer formes (each 64 pp.) being imposed in a single forme and then printed together on both sides of the sheet, so that — after the sheet had been cut in half down the middle — there were two copies of the same half sheet (each 128 pp.) which would then each be cut into eight pieces and subsequently folded to make gatherings A–H (each 16 pp.) of the book.<sup>1</sup>

There is one example of a in-128° which fortunately survives not only in book form but also in the form of an unfolded sheet: it is a *Kalendarium* printed by Plantin at Antwerp in 1570. The bound copy is in the Royal Library in Brussels, the sheet in the Plantin–Moretus Museum in Antwerp. This sheet has been described and partially reproduced by Hellinga,<sup>2</sup> being given the collation '128°: A–Q<sup>8</sup>, 256 pp.', but this formula cannot be reconciled with Hellinga's own observation that sixty-four pages were imposed in one forme. This example of the smallest folding subsequently found its way into the literature of analytical bibliography.<sup>3</sup>

Now it is surprising that in his standard work on the Plantin house Voet identifies this sheet — with a reference to Hellinga's illustration of it — as an in-64°.<sup>4</sup> He received a lecture for this from Gaskell in his review,<sup>5</sup> but in the second volume of his recently published large Plantin bibliography, which impresses by its annotation, he sticks to his guns: there his collation reads: '64mo. . . A–Q<sup>8</sup>, pp. [1-256]'; in an explanatory note he refers not to one sheet but two.<sup>6</sup>

Studying the document in the Plantin–Moretus Museum (shelf-mark Arch. 1230) the first thing one observes is that it is part of a large folio volume, completely filled with unfolded sheets of smaller formats, which bears the manuscript title: 'Theatri flosculorum Plantinianae Officinae. Pars prima. Antwerpiae 1575.' The preliminaries of this work, which is bound in a sturdy contemporary binding, include a dedication by Johannes Moretus to his father-in-law, a short note to the reader and an index of the titles of the works included. The sheet in question composes ff. 462–3. The fact that this is indeed a single sheet, incorporated into the volume after a single folding, is clearly apparent: ff. 462–3 are conjugate leaves; and there is therefore only one watermark (on fo. 463). The chain lines

1 E.g. J. H. G. Ernesti, *Die wol-eingerichtete Buchdruckerey* (Nürnberg 1721; 2nd edn. 1733; reprint 1965 and 1975), p. 122; M. D. Fertel, *La science pratique de l'imprimerie* (Saint Omer 1723; reprint 1971), p. 178; J. Smith, *The Printer's Grammar* (London 1955; reprint 1965), p. 256.

2 W. Gs Hellinga, *Copy and print in the Netherlands* (Amsterdam 1962), Pl. 51 and pp. 178, 137.

3 See P. Gaskell, *A new introduction to bibliography* (London 1972), p. 107.

4 L. Voet, *The Golden Compasses*, vol. 2 (Amsterdam 1972), pl. 29 and p. 168.

5 In: *Journal of the Printing Historical Society*, 9 (1973/4), p. 70.

6 L. Voet, *The Plantin Press*, vol. 2 (Amsterdam 1981), No. 862.

crossing the page from top to bottom are in themselves a sign of the format: in an in-64° they would run horizontally. The sheet indisputably represents the in-128° format. At the same time one might add that the Plantin press did not produce this clever little piece of work by half-sheet imposition but with two full formes (with sixteen signatures).

However, Voet's statement that the format is in-64° tallies with information contained in the Plantin archives. In his *Golden Compasses* he points out what must be a listing of the *Kalendarium* in the publisher's catalogue of 1615: 'in 64: forma minutissima'; in his *Plantin Press* he gives no argument to back his assertion, but presumably he saw the index at the front of the 'Theatri flosculorum' (probably compiled by Johannes Moretus), where the format is given as 'in 64°'. Although a bibliographer cannot treat such contemporary data lightly, in this instance there is not the slightest possibility of doubt.

FRANS A. JANSSEN

DISCOVERY OF A COPY OF AN INDULGENCE PRINTED AT GHENT  
IN 1487 BY AREND DE KEYSERE

In his 1972 article, 'Oude drukken in Belgische Rijksarchieven', L. Mees mentions a letter of indulgence issued by Pope Innocent VIII and printed at Ghent in 1487 by Arend de Keyser.<sup>1</sup> That indulgence is now in the State Archives (Rijksarchief) at Ghent, reference number 'de Prudhomme, 78'. Mees also cites Kronenberg's *Campbell's annales de la typographie néerlandaise au XVe siècle: contributions to a new edition*, in which the author states (p. 47, No. 1378e) that the Arnhem Library (which he refers to as the Public Library, or 'Openbare Leesaal en Bibliotheek') has a copy of an indulgence of 1487. Mees suggests that this copy might well belong to the edition he describes. Unfortunately, he says, he was unable to verify this, since he had been told by Wytze and Lotte Hellinga that they had searched in vain for the Arnhem copy some years previously, when they had been preparing their *Fifteenth-century printing types of the Low Countries*. The letter had been untraceable because it had not been classified separately.

That letter of indulgence has now been found. It was 'hidden away' in Volume 6 of G. van Hasselt's so-called *Kloosterboek*. Interestingly enough, that fact had been recorded back in 1922 by Paul Fredericq in his description of papal indulgences in the Netherlands,<sup>2</sup> but Mees was unaware of this. Had he spotted Fredericq's reference he would have been able to confirm his suspicion that the Arnhem copy belonged to the same edition as the specimen in Ghent. Careful comparison of the Arnhem indulgence and the specimen described by Mees (reproduced as fig. 4 of his article, but printed by mistake facing p. 135) shows that both letters were printed from the same type matter. The only differences, naturally enough, are in the manuscript additions. Line 2 of the Arnhem copy has two insertions in ink: *devotus*, and the name *Anthוניus van Everdic*. Line 15 contains the handwritten date: *die ultima Mensis Aprilis*. On the back of the indulgence, which is printed on parchment (measuring

1 See L. Mees, O.F.M., 'Oude drukken in Belgische Rijksarchieven', in: *Archives et bibliothèques de Belgique / Archief- en Bibliotheekwezen in België*, 43 (1972), pp. 20-6. The letter of indulgence is described on pp. 25-6.

2 See *Codex documentorum sacratissimarum indulgentiarum Neerlandicarum: verzameling van stukken betreffende de pauselijke aflaten in de Nederlanden (1300-1600)*, ed. by Paul Fredericq (The Hague 1922), No. 234, pp. 313-14 [= *Rijks geschiedkundige publicatiën; kleine serie* 21]. Fredericq refers incorrectly to the *Kloosterboek*, instead of the *Kloosterboek* (i.e. a book containing brief notes). The present reference number of the indulgence is 'Kluis MS. 39'.