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Printed in Holland:
the anonymous *Temporis filia Veritas*, [Leiden] 1589*

'Temporis filia Veritas' is an ancient proverb expressing with Roman succinctness the notion that truth often reveals itself only after the passage of time: Truth as the daughter of Time or Tempus – the Greek Chronos. It personifies an historical phenomenon through two characters from classical mythology, where gods, goddesses, and a host of lesser denizens of Olympus gave visible form to various abstract concepts. In his *Adagia*, Erasmus borrowed this proverb from Gellius (*Noctes attici* xii, 11.7) whose memory uncharacteristically failed him when he wished to give his source. Even in his time then, its origins may have been shrouded in a distant past, probably in Greece.

We can safely suppose that the proverb’s revival in the sixteenth century derived largely from Erasmus’s quotation. It even worked its way into the English royal palaces. Queen Mary, for example, made it her personal motto, while various artists within and outside her court rendered it in literary and pictorial interpretations. The subject certainly lent itself well to such use: a young and shapely Truth accompanied by an aged and rather decrepit Father Time formed an attractive combination for any artist. Dr. Saxl gives a few telling examples in one of his articles.

The proverb gained popularity in the Netherlands as well. Hadrianus Junius (when will we see a fitting monograph about this important humanist, considered a second Erasmus in his own time?) published his *Philippes, seu in nuptias Divi Philipp i . . . et heroinae Mariae . . .* (STC 14860.5-61) in London in 1554. This epic poem on Queen Mary’s political marriage to the future King Phillip II of Spain contains a dedication: ‘In Regis & Reginae symbola . . . Mariae Veritatis Temporis Filia . . .’. In the same Junius’s *Emblemata* (Antwerp 1565), emblem no. 53, entitled ‘Veritas tempore revelatur, dissidio obtuit’, includes a depiction of ‘Veritas, Temporis nata’. This engraving reappears in Geoffrey Whitney’s *A choice of emblemes* (Leiden 1586), the first English emblem book.

Our concern here is the fact that this proverb served somewhat later, in 1589,

* This is a slightly revised version of an article originally published in Dutch in *Van pen tot laser*, 31 opstellen over boek en schrift, aangeboden aan Ernst Brache (Amsterdam 1996), pp. 308-13.


2 For the difference between Junius’s and Whitney’s interpretations of the proverb, see Donald Gordon, ‘“Veritas filia temporis”: Hadrianus Junius and Geoffrey Whitney’, in: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 3 (1939/40), pp. 228-40 (pp. 236-8; illus.).
as the title of an anonymous tract that presents a few puzzles. J.A. van Dorsten, later professor at the University of Leiden, ran across this *Temporis Filia Veritas*, a mery devise called the Troublesome travell of Tyme, and the daungerous delivery of her Daughter Truth* in an early Leiden auction catalogue. In 1630 the printer-publisher Govert Basson liquidated his business in that city, established as a bookshop by his father Thomas in 1584. For that occasion he printed a list of what was to be sold from the stocks of the bookshop and of the firm's own publications. At the end this catalogue includes a section with the remaining stock of books in sheets, which he offered, 'om by Halff dosijnen, dosijnen ende by de Riem te vercoopen' [to be sold by the half-dozen, dozen, and by the ream]. One of these books is entitled *Temporis filia Veritas*.

Besides this remnant of one of Basson's own(?) publications, the catalogue reports another interesting item at the end: 'Spiegel der Gerechtichetyt van H.N. [Hendrik Niclaes] ende meer andere verscheyden Boecken van de selfde, in Duysts, Latijin, Francoys ende Engels.' [The Mirror of Justice by H.N. and further various other books by the same, in Dutch, Latin, French, and English]. From this description one can conclude that remnants of several publications of the Family of Love found their way to Leiden. H. de la Fontaine Verwey emphasized the importance of this discovery, suggesting that one could infer 'dat [Basson] de gehele drukkerij van het Huis der Liefde van Keulen naar Leiden overgebracht en daar voortgezet had' [that Basson moved the entire printing office of the Family of Love from Cologne to Leiden and continued it there]. As we shall see, this conclusion proved only partly true.

When a Dutch publishing house of this period holds such unusual items as an English tract alongside remnants of several editions from the printing office of a sect that also published in that language, one naturally supposes some sort of connection. Van Dorsten believed there was such a connection, but all attempts to gain further insight into the relation between these publications failed; nothing in the pamphlet indicated a connection between its author and the Family of Love. In its text, a conversation between 'Balthesar the Barber' and 'Bennon the Button-maker', representatives of four religions explain their

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3 STC 23875. The only copy known is in the Cambridge University Library (Sayle 6791). The Luttrell Society has published a modern edition by F.P. Wilson.


6 Bögel, op. cit. (n. 5), p. 239 and pp. 7-9; Van Dorsten, op. cit. (n. 4), pp. 64ff., with a photographic reproduction on p. 69.