Zacharias Heyns, Sometime Apprentice to Moretus, Becomes the First Merchant/Publisher in Amsterdam

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Abstract
Zacharias Heyns, a son of a schoolmaster and an apprentice to Jan Moretus, established his bookshop in Amsterdam between 1592 and 1594. The choice of a publisher's device, combining Christian with humanistic elements, proves that he was aiming at a wide public, both Catholic and Protestant, Latin and vernacular, local and international. He cooperated with several printers, since he himself never ran a printing shop. In his early years he published schoolbooks in small formats, as well as humanistic books for the international market. For the local market he published Dutch translations of French books in octavo or smaller formats. Around 1600 he changed his policy and displayed a talent to assess which genres were going to be popular with the new public in Amsterdam, often rich immigrants from the Southern Netherlands, who could afford more expensive books. Whether it was a costume book, an emblem book, a fable book, a biblical epic, a travel story, a geographical description or a military manual, when the texts were not available Heyns simply translated, adapted or wrote them himself.

Keywords
Zacharias Heyns, marchand-libraire, Frankfurt Book Fair, Amsterdam, publisher's device, schoolbooks

On the title page of the Const-thoonende Juweel (1607) (illus. 1) Zacharias Heyns called himself 'drucker des Landtschaps van Overijssel' [printer to the Province of Overijssel]. This immediately raises the question of the designation 'printer' since I am convinced that he never worked in a printing shop and he probably never owned one. Zacharias Heyns belonged to the category of what is commonly called a merchant/publisher ('marchand libraire'). By

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1 Const-Thoonende Juweel, By de lófijcke stadt Haerlem, ten versoecke van Trou moet blijcken, in't licht gebracht. Tot Zwol. By Zacharias Heyns, Drucker des Landschaps van Over-ijssel, 1607 (Antwerp University Library, shelf mark RD 1 Const).
Title page of Const-thoonende Ivweel, By de loffijcke stadt Haerlem, […] (Zwolle 1607). Copy: Antwerp University Library, shelf mark RD 1 Const.