

Varia Bibliographica

The Printer Jean Zurel of Lamorménil, an Anabaptist from Liège in Exile

In his article on Anabaptism in the Region of Liège, Olivier Donneau notes the presence of printers at the heart of the Anabaptist diaspora from Liège, among whom Idelette de Burre, the future wife of Jean Calvin, figures as well.¹ In 1537 the refugees from Liège found refuge in Geneva, recently won over to Protestantism under the influence of Guillaume Farel. Two of these men, Herman de Gerbihan and Audry Benoît, began to engage in theological debates with the Reformed preacher. Very quickly the city council, perceiving the persuasive force of the two orators, put a stop to the religious disputations and took restrictive measures against the two Anabaptists and their co-religionists. They were forbidden all access to the city as well as any further disputation with Farel. Among the persons affected by these measures was a certain *Johannes Bomecomensus imprimeur du Lyège*. A few months later, a *Johann Lamoramenus von Lüttich* was interrogated by the civil authorities of Strasbourg regarding his past. He claimed to have left the diocese of Liège four years earlier and to have engaged in theological disputations in Liège and Marburg, completely omitting any mention of his adventure in Geneva. He also asserted that he had read Martin Bucer. A *Jean Zurelius*, a printer from Liège, was also reported to be in Strasbourg at the same time. Olivier Donneau was surprised to come across so many typographers originating from a city in which the printing press was still unknown, and wondered, correctly, if these two persons could not in fact be one and the same. The response to his question is provided in the colophons to two works printed in Ulm, the first in 1539 (no. 1) and the other in 1541 (no. 4), by a certain Johannes Zurelus Lomaromenus, i.e. Jean Zurel of Lamorménil. Thanks to

¹ O. Donneau, 'L'anabaptisme au Pays de Liège (1533-1593)', in: *Annuaire d'Histoire Liégeoise*, 32 (2003), pp. 5-38, esp. 12-14.

this evidence the accuracy of Olivier Donneau's hypothesis can be well and truly established.

A native of Lamorménil, a small village situated today in the province of Luxembourg, Jean Zurel went into exile after having converted to Anabaptism. He spent time in Marburg, Geneva and Strasbourg before establishing himself in Ulm in 1538.² There he principally concentrated on the book trade. He entered into a business relationship with Diener von Varnier, the Elder, and the printer Sebastian Franck, for whom he cast types in 1540. He also printed four works, three in 1539 and one more in 1541: two books of hymns in German composed by Michaël Weisse, paid by Jacob Grüner (nos. 2-3), an edition of the humanist Kaspar Brusch's paraphrases of the *Proverbs* of Solomon (no. 1), as well as a poem by Baptista Mantuanus (no. 4), a publication for which he composed a preface in Latin. Where Zurel received his education remains unknown. We know only that he was already referred to as a printer when he arrived in Geneva in 1537. Whether he had his own press or had to use the typographic material of another colleague is also not known. However it may be, the choice to print texts written by a Lutheran author such as Weisse clearly shows that Zurel had abandoned, or rather put aside, his Anabaptist convictions.

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*List of works printed by Jean Zurel**

[1] Kaspar Brusch, *Solomonis proverbiorum capita duo priora carmina red-dita* . . . , Ulm, Jean Zurel, 1539, 4° (VD16 B 8797).

[2] Michaël Weiss, *Das Picardisch Gesangbuech, oder Kirchenordnung der Christlichen Bruederschafft Picarden genant, darinn die gantze summ des Newen Testaments begriffen*, Ulm, Jean Zurel for Jacob Grüner, 1539, 8° (VD16 W 1646).

[3] Michaël Weiss, *Ein hübsch christlich gesang buchlen, darinnen kirchen ordnung und gesenge, so jetzund in allen orten, da die warheit Jhesu Christi klar,*

² On Zurel's activities in Ulm: K. D. Hassler, *Die Buchdrucker Geschichte Ulm's zur vierten Saculareisen der Erfindung der Buchdruckerkunst* (Ulm 1840), col. 146; J. Benzing, *Die Buchdrucker des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts im deutschen Sprachgebiet*, 2nd edn. (Wiesbaden 1986), p. 441.

* Abbreviation: VD 16 = *Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachbereich erschienenen Drucke des XVI. Jahrhunderts*, 25 vols. (Stuttgart 1983-2000).

lauter und rein verkündigt und gepredigt wird, von den Christgleubigen gebraucht und teglich Got dem allerhöchsten zu ehren gesungen werden, Ulm, Jean Zurel for Jacob Grüner, 1539, 8° (VD16 W 1647).

[4] Baptista Mantuanus, *Bucolica seu adolescentia, in decem aeglogas divisa*, Ulm, Jean Zurel, 1541, 4° (VD16 S 7210).