VULCANIUS AND HIS NETWORK OF LANGUAGE LOVERS.
DE LITERIS ET LINGUA GETARUM SIVE GOTHORUM (1597)

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In 1597, Bonaventura Vulcanius published *De literis et lingua Getarum sive Gothorum*, a remarkable opusculum containing a number of various language specimens. The present contribution aims to demonstrate that Vulcanius was a typical exponent of Renaissance Protestant plurilinguism, although some striking differences with the works of his Dutch contemporaries will be highlighted as well. In connection with the general theme of this volume, I intend to show that Vulcanius benefited considerably from his extensive network in enriching his collection of language specimens.

As far as Vulcanius' views on language are concerned, one has to rely mainly on the concise dissertation mentioned above.¹ Before discussing its aims and its importance against the general intellectual background of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, I will first offer a schematic description of the contents of this highly composite work.

pp. [I–XIII]: Dedication to the *Ordines Frisiae*

pp. 1–41: Gothic | *Commentariolus viri cuiusdam Anonymi in literas Gothicas ex vetustissimo quodam Codice argenteo (ut eum vocat) sumptas* and *Alter commentariolus in alphabetum Gothicum et Notas Lombardicas in vetustissimo quodam codice repertas*: anonymous dissertations on the Gothic sounds and on the “Lombardic script” (actually the shorthand system developed by Marcus Tullius Tiro, Marcus Tullius Cicero’s slave) edited by Vulcanius;

pp. 43–48: Runes | *Quadruplex Alphabetum Gothicum*: Vulcanius wrongly equates the Gothic letters with Runes;

pp. 49–53: Crimean Gothic | *Gothorum qui hodie Tauricam Chersonesum incolant lingua*: fragment from Busbecquius’ *Legationis Turcicae Epistolae* (1589) with a list of words;

¹ The full title is *De literis et lingua Getarum sive Gothorum. Item de notis Lombardicis. Quibus accesserunt specimina variarum linguarum, quarum indicem pagina quae praefationem sequitur ostendit* (Lugduni Batavorum: 1597) ex officina Plantiniana, apud Franciscum Raphelengium. A digital facsimile can be found on <<http://tuin-der-talen.wikis.nl/>>. As this work is the focus of this paper, references to it are limited to its page numbers.

pp. 54–69: “Teutonic” | *Specimen veteris linguae Teutonicae*: various text specimens (among which the Oaths of Strasbourg) and a list of words;
 pp. 70–86: Old English | *Specimen veteris linguae Saxonicae*: text specimen (Alfred’s preface to Gregorius’ *Cura pastoralis*);
 pp. 87–88: Persian | *Specimen linguae Persicae*: list of words; beginning of *Genesis*;
 pp. 89–96: Basque | *Parergon sive Specimen Cantabricaе, hoc est veteris Vasconum linguae*: Oratio dominica; list of words; numbers; [Appendix]
 p. 98: Frisian | *Oratio Dominica lingua Frisica*: Oratio dominica;
 p. 99: Welsh | *Geneseos capitis primi initium lingua Cambrica sive Wallica*: beginning of *Genesis*;
 pp. 99–100: Icelandic | *Initium Geneseos Cap. 1 lingua Islandica*: beginning of *Genesis*;
 pp. 100–105: Romani | *De Nubianis erronibus quos Itali Cingaros appellant, eorumque lingua*: list of words;
 pp. 106–109: Rotwelsch | *De idiotismo aliorum quorundam Erronum, a Nubianis non admodum absimilium*: list of words.

Reasons of space prevent me from discussing these documents in depth.² We must first consider the underlying motives that prompted Vulcanius to publish this dissertation. An answer can be found in the introduction, where he indicates to the reader that the opusculum should be seen as a supplement to his edition of text sources relat-

² With regard to Vulcanius’ treatment of (Crimean) Gothic, see the detailed study by Roger Van de Velde: *De studie van het Gotisch in de Nederlanden: Bijdrage tot een status quaestionis over de studie van het Gotisch en het Krimgotisch* (Gent: 1966). In his paper “The Runes in Bonaventura Vulcanius *De literis & lingua Getarum siue Gothorum* (1597): Provenance and Origins”, in this volume, R. Dekker offers more background on the runes found in Vulcanius’ book. With regard to the Oaths of Strasbourg (842), which are traditionally considered to be the first official testimony of the vernacular languages of French and German, see T. Deneire, T. Van Hal, *Lip-sius tegen Becanus: Over het Nederlands als oertaal; Editie, vertaling en interpretatie van zijn brief aan Hendrik Schotti (19 december 1598)* (Amersfoort: 2006), 147 with further references given there. See Anon., “Vulcanius’ Romani vocabulary”, *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* 9 (1930), 16–25 for a discussion of Vulcanius’ references to Romani. The chapter on Basque was reissued under the same title in Paris (1860); F.J. Oroz Arizcuren, “Lucubración sobre un glosario vasco-latino. El *Parergon* de Vulcanius (1597)”, in *Logos Semantikos: Studia linguistica in honorem Eugenio Coseriu, 1921–1981*, H. Geckeler, B. Schlieben-Lange, J. Trabant (eds) (Madrid/Berlin: 1981), vol. 1, 339–357 discusses Vulcanius’ contribution in the field of Basque studies. Cod. Vulc. 108 *pars* 31 contains the Basque word list published in *De literis*. Vulcanius’ notes on Persian and Welsh are discussed by J.T.P. de Bruijn, “Iranian Studies in the Netherlands”, *Iranian Studies* 20 (1987) 161–177 and T.M. Chotzen, *Primitieve keltistiek in de Nederlanden: Openbare les gehouden bij de opening van zijn colleges als privaatschool in de Keltische philologie aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam op 9 oktober 1931* (Den Haag: 1931) respectively.

ing to the Goths (also published in 1597).³ He states that he intends to treat the subject matter that had been neglected in Jordanes' discussion of the antiquity and prominence of the Goths, i.e. language.⁴ To fill this gap, he publishes two anonymous treatises on the Gothic script and the Gothic language, followed by other language materials he has collected, all of which are relevant to the illustration of Gothic.⁵ This clearly shows that Vulcanius' approach to the language of the Goths was influenced by ethnological and historical concerns. This was in keeping with the general intellectual climate of the Early Modern period, in which language research was not yet practiced as an independent discipline. Rather, it constituted an auxiliary branch of learning serving the fields of philosophy, theology, history, and ethnology. In the words of Anthony Grafton, "Etymology, and the history of languages in general, was one of the most fashionable sub-disciplines of sixteenth-century scholarship".⁶ In addition to this non-autonomous 'theoretical' point of departure, the study of 'historical linguistics' was often fuelled by 'ideological' motives as well. These motives were mostly of a nationalist-like and religious nature, which were often intertwined. In the preface, Vulcanius clearly expresses his nationalist-like feelings when he does not conceal his preference for

³ *Iornandes Episcopus Ravennas De Getarum sive Gothorum origine et rebus gestis. Isidori Chronicon Gothorum, Vandalorum, Suevorum, [...] Procopii Fragmentum, De priscis sedibus Gothorum, [...] Acc. et Iornandes De regnorum et temporum successione [...]* (Lugduni Batavorum: 1597).

⁴ "De gentis Geticae vetustate atque praestantia, Illustres Amplissimique Viri, cum a Iornande meo abunde multa sint dicta, superest ut de lingua etiam Getica pauca in medium afferamus, de qua nihil fere literarum monumentis proditum comperio, praeterquam quod Ioannes Magnus Gothus, Archiepiscopus Upsalensis, in sua Gothorum Sueonumque historia, literas Geticas nobis exhibuit [...]" (I).

⁵ On page 43, Vulcanius states: "Habes, Benevole Lector, commentarium anonymum de literis linguaque Getarum, et de Notis Lombardicis, ita ut ad manus meas pervenit fideliter typis expressum. Cui subiungam alia nonnulla quae hinc inde ab amicis accepi, ad illustrationem huius linguae pertinentia. Alphabeta videlicet diversi generis et inscriptiones antiquas variis in locis repertas."

⁶ See A.T. Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship* (Oxford: 1983), 117. More background on early comparative linguistics can be found in D. Droixhe, *La linguistique et l'appel de l'histoire (1600–1800): Rationalisme et révolutions positivistes* (Genève: 1978); M. Tavoni, "Renaissance Linguistics (Introduction, Western Europe)", in *History of Linguistics*, G. Lepschy (ed.) (London/New York: 1998), vol. 3, 1–107; K. Dekker, *The Origins of Old Germanic Studies in the Low Countries* (Leiden: 1999); J. Trabant, *Mithridates im Paradies: Kleine Geschichte des Sprachdenkens* (München: 2003); P. Burke, *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: 2004) and J.P. Considine, *Dictionaries in Early Modern Europe. Lexicography and the Making of Heritage* (Cambridge: 2008).

Dutch. He dedicates his work to the *Ordines Frisiae*, partly because the Frisian language was very similar to the language of the Teutonics and the Goths.⁷ Moreover, he launches a call for a “large-scale research project” on “Teutonic”:

Hoc certe constat ex utriusque linguae inter se collatione, Teutonicam nostram infinita praestantissimorum et significantissimorum vocabulorum accessione locupletari atque exornari posse. In quam curam magnopere optandum fuerit ut viri docti variarumque linguarum et praecipue maternas suae vernaculaeque amantes totis viribus incumbant, eorumque studium publica liberalitate exsuscitetur ac foveatur.⁸ [The mutual comparison of both languages clearly shows that our Teutonic language could be enriched and made more graceful by endless access to the most prominent and meaningful words [sc. of Gothic]. It would be highly desirable for scholars and amateurs of various tongues—and of their own mother and vernacular language in the first place—to concentrate on this with full force, and for their efforts to be stimulated and rewarded by public funding.]

In Vulcanius’ eyes, languages that were closely related to Dutch could provide inspiration for coining new Dutch words.⁹ From this perspective, language comparison had a very practical purpose as well. Vulcanius wrote his work for speakers of Dutch, and certainly not for the French:

Neque enim haec scribo exteris hominibus, qui prae vernacula sua, sive potius Notho Latina lingua reliquas quas Barbaras indigetant, superciliose contemnunt, et magnificis speciosisque titulis Glossaria, sive Thesaurus de linguae suae divitiis conscribunt, cum divitias ne nominare quidem possint, nisi mutuato a Teutonibus vocabulo.¹⁰ [For I do not write this for foreigners, who—to the benefit of their own vernacular, or rather: Bastard Latin—contemptuously mock other languages, which are called barbarian. They assign grandiose and boastful titles to their glossaries and dictionaries on the richness of their language, even though

⁷ “Partim quod Frisica vestra lingua prae ceteris Belgicarum provinciarum linguis ad priscam illam Teutonum ac fortassis etiam Gothorum linguam quam proxime accedat; partim quod in hisce veterum linguarum Speciminibus patriae vestrae linguae originem magna vos cum voluptate agnituros confidam” (XII–XIII).

⁸ Pages IX–X.

⁹ See also “Neque enim dubito quin etiam eius lectio [...] magnae tibi et voluptati, et ad locupletandam vernaculam nostram linguam utilitati sit futura” (62) and “habes, benigne lector, specimen non unum unius eiusdemque linguae Teutonicae veteris. E qua quamplurima significantissima vocabula locupletandae ornandaeque patriae nostrae, hoc est, Teutonicae linguae depromi possunt” (64).

¹⁰ Page 65.

they can't even name 'richness' <sc. Fr. 'richesse'> without falling back on a word borrowed from Dutch.]

In order to understand this vitriolic statement we must consider the sense of cultural competition among countries in Early Modern Europe. For each of the new political powers, it was crucial to trace their descent from a distinguished origin. The French, obviously, could trace their language back to that of the Roman Empire. All the same, it was just as obvious that French had undergone many alterations with regard to its Latin origin. For this reason, advocates of Dutch and German, who had regained their self-confidence after the discovery of Tacitus' treatise *Germania*, often taunted their French neighbours for being speakers of a corrupt language ('*spuma linguarum*').¹¹

The above survey of language specimens included by Vulcanius reveals that his work on the Goths' language actually turned out to be a sampling of all sorts of language specimens. On several occasions, Vulcanius apologised for modifying his initial plan and justified these modifications.¹² He was aware, for example, that Basque is unrelated to Dutch, but justified including his *parergon* on the Basque language as follows:

Libuit tamen mihi id corollarii loco adicere, ut lingua paucis hactenus nota vel audita innotescat, et studiosis linguarum diligentius in eam inquirendi fructumque aliquem ex ea percipiendi materiem suppeditem.¹³ [Nevertheless, it was a pleasure to me to include this as an additional element to make the language, which is relatively unknown and unheard of at present, better known. I wanted to offer some materials that would enable language investigators to study the language more closely and to gain some results from this.]

¹¹ See M.J. van der Wal, "Early Language Typology: Attitudes Towards Languages in the 16th and 17th Centuries", in *History and Rationality: The Skövde Papers in the Historiography of Linguistics*, K.D. Dutz, K.-Å. Forsgren (eds) (Münster: Nodus, 1995), 93–106.

¹² Vulcanius starts his section on the Romani language as follows: "Tametsi vereor ne quis mihi Horatianum illud occinat, *amphora coepit / institui, currente rota cur urceus exit?* quippe qui Commentarium de lingua Gethica pollicitus, varia aliarum linguarum, quae parum aut nihil cum ea affinitatis habeant, specimina lectoribus obiiicam. Non possum tamen adhuc manum, quod aiunt, de tabula, quin De lingua Nubianorum qui erronum instar incertis sedibus catervatim universum orbem terrarum pervagantur pauca hisce chartis illinam quae ab illustri viro Iosepho Scaligero accepi, quod ea ad gentis et linguae paucis notae cognitionem pertinentia Philoglottis non ingrata fore confidam" (100–101). See also 70, 89, 109.

¹³ Page 89.

Moreover, Vulcanius stated in his *Appendix*¹⁴ that he would have published many more fragments if Hieronymus Megiser had not preceded him. The German scholar Hieronymus Megiser (1553–1618) was the author of various historical dictionaries. Vulcanius refers to his *Specimen quadraginta diversarum atque inter se differentium linguarum et dialectorum* (1593), and he regards his own small appendix as a supplement to this, since he includes languages lacking in Megiser's work.¹⁵ The booklet reveals Vulcanius to be a genuine language-lover. More than once, he makes use of the term *philoglottus*.¹⁶ Not only is he fascinated by his own vernacular language, but he is also intrigued by radically different languages, such as Basque. His ultimate aim seems to have been to raise awareness of linguistic diversity.¹⁷ This was in line with increasing appreciation for the plurality of languages, mainly in Protestant regions. According to Jürgen Trabant, the sixteenth century was one of the only periods in history in which respect for "Mithridates" or, in other words, for the benefits of language diversity, gained ground. By contrast, most other centuries upheld the Catholic ideal of monolingualism, thought to have prevailed in Paradise. Apart from Megiser's work, a considerable number of Protestant scholars in German-speaking regions had already published dissertations on the phenomenon of language diversity. Vulcanius' dissertation could be regarded as a similar publication, and thus entirely expected, but in the Netherlands it was highly innovative. The text specimens chosen to

¹⁴ Page 97.

¹⁵ "Poteram quidem, studiose lector, hoc loco plurimarum etiam aliarum inter se diversarum linguarum specimina adicere, quae latissime per universum orbem terrarum diffusae, apud potentissimas florentissimasque nationes hodie sunt in usu, earum praecipue quas Graeci et Latini fastidiose Barbaras vocant, ut Philoglotti ex mutua earum inter se collatione, quid quaeque vel cum Gothica, vel Teutonica, vel alioquin ipsae inter se affinitatis habeant iucunde pariter utiliterque investigare possent. Ceterum cum Francofurti editum sit anno 1592 ex typographeo Ioannis Spiessii, Specimen XL diversarum atque inter se differentium linguarum et dialectorum, a Ieronymo Megisero e diversis authoribus collectarum, quibus oratio Dominica est expressa, supersedendum mihi huic operae esse duxi" (97). On Megiser's linguistic works, see Otto Zeller, *Problemgeschichte der vergleichenden (indogermanischen) Sprachwissenschaft* (Osnabrück: Biblio-Verlag, 1967) and Considine, *Dictionaries in Early Modern Europe*, 291–293.

¹⁶ See excerpt quoted above: "viri docti variarumque linguarum et praecipue maternas suae vernaculaeque amantes", referenced note 12.

¹⁷ "Vobis vero illustres amplissimique viri etiam hoc quidquid est opellae illustrandae linguae Geticae hactenus ignotae a me impensum, una cum specimine variarum linguarum quae cum Gotica, vel cum Teutonica nostra aliquid affinitatis habent, immo etiam aliarum quae ab his plane diversae" (XII–XIII).

illustrate the diversity of languages often reveal the Protestant inspiration underlying these projects, since most of them are translations of the Lord's Prayer or other biblical texts.

Vulcanius himself mastered a considerable number of languages. First of all, he was very skilled in Latin. He was a Professor of Greek Language at the universities of Cologne and Leyden. Some drafts in his legacy reveal Vulcanius' acquaintance with Hebrew as well.¹⁸ As to modern languages, Vulcanius had a good knowledge of French, Italian and Spanish.¹⁹ Furthermore, he had apparently been studying Basque for a while.²⁰ In addition, Vulcanius' auction catalogue clearly reveals his interest in other foreign languages.²¹

With his dissertation, Vulcanius aimed at demonstrating the linguistic relationship between Gothic and languages such as German, Frisian and Dutch. In this dissertation, however, his arguments are poorly elaborated. He does not evaluate contemporary theories, limiting himself to the remark that Goropius Becanus (1519–1573) was

¹⁸ See Cod. Vulc. 1; 48; 98; 108 fasc. 30 in the University Library of Leiden.

¹⁹ See Alfons Dewitte, "Bonaventura Vulcanius en Philips Marnix van Sint-Aldegonde 1577–1606", in *Album Albert Schouteet* (Bruges: 1973), 60: "Vulgarium linguarum non vulgaris notitia"; R. De Smet, "Taal, context en conventie in Marnix' correspondentie", in *Een intellectuele activist: Studies over leven en werk van Philips van Marnix van Sint Aldegonde*, H. Duits and T. Van Strien (eds), (Hilversum: 2001), 37–38 as well. Cod. Vulc. 20: ff. 1–2 contains some remarks *de lingua Castellana*.

²⁰ Page 91.

²¹ *Bibliotheca Bon. Vulcanii sive, catalogus plurimorum [...] librorum [...] et manuscriptorum: et variae tabulae geographicae [...] et variae effigies virorum insignium aere incisae: quarum auctio habebitur Lugd. Bat. in bibliopolio Lud. Elzevirii ad diem XV Nov. 1614* (Leiden), consulted in the microfilm reproduction in *Dutch Book Sales Catalogues, 1599–1800*, B. Van Selm, J.A. Gruys, H.W. De Kooker (eds) (Leiden: 1990). A part from many works on Greek and Latin language, various grammars and dictionaries in the field of Semitic linguistics figure in the extensive catalogue. Thus, for instance, the Hebrew dictionaries of Sebastian Münster, *Dictionarium Hebraicum* (Basel: [1523]); Johannes Forster, *Dictionarium Hebr. Novum* (Basel: 1557) and David b. Isaac de Pomis, *Lexicon Hebr. et Chald. Linguae* (Venice: 1587); the Hebrew grammars of Elias Levita, *Grammatica Hebraea* (Basel: 1537) and Franciscus Junius, *Grammatica Hebraeae linguae [...]* (Geneva: 1590). Vulcanius also possessed Christophorus Crinesius's *Lexicon Syriacum* (Wittenberg: 1612) and Immanuel Tremellius's *Grammatica Chaldaea et Syra* (Geneva: 1569). A special chapter entitled "*Proverbia diversarum linguarum*" (44) contains some books and manuscripts treating Slavonic. In addition, Vulcanius had a great number of Spanish, Italian and especially French books at his disposal, as well as many multilingual dictionaries. See the contribution of Paul Smith, pp. 121–144 in this volume, "Remarques sur les catalogues de vente aux enchères de la bibliothèque de Vulcanius."

wrong in deducing all Gothic words from Teutonic.²² This lack of theoretical interest becomes readily apparent in his approach to the Crimean Gothic language materials he found in Busbequius' *Legationis Turcicae Epistolae* (1589). Apart from various inaccuracies in his copy of the word list, Vulcanius omits Busbequius' thoughts on the relation between the Gothic and the Flemish language. Busbequius' comments on the spread of the Goths and the difference between the Goths and the Getes have been left out as well.²³ In some passages, Vulcanius openly admits to leaving the comparative work itself to other scholars.²⁴ Remarkably enough, more theoretical considerations would be found in his *Parergon* and *Appendix*.

As stated above, Vulcanius rarely makes explicit reference to the genealogical relationship between the languages included in his book. In the preface, he states that Gothic and the old Germanic language share a lot of similarities, despite some major differences.²⁵ The title reveals that he even considered Gothic and Getic to be identical languages. This was a common and widespread misconception that could be traced back to Jordanes, although Busbequius had underlined the difference between both nations. During the Renaissance, tribes and nations with similar names (such as Scyths and Scots) were often confused, as were the languages spoken by these nations. Runes and even Tironian notes were erroneously considered to be Gothic letters. According to Vulcanius, Persian and German are 'somehow' cognate:

²² "In omnibus vero id tentare, omniaque Getica sive Gothica vocabula ad Teutonicum reducere velle (quod demonstrare nititur Goropius) est operam ludere" (VIII). In his *Origines Antwerpianae* (1569), Goropius Becanus regarded Gothic as a corrupted variant of Dutch, since it would have undergone the influence of Greek.

²³ See Van de Velde, *De studie van het Gotisch in de Nederlanden*, 97, who believes that Vulcanius copied this information from a circulating manuscript and not from a printed copy of the book.

²⁴ "[...] E cuius Harmoniae Evangelicae vetustissima interpretatione Teutonica depromam nonnulla, quae huius linguae studiosi cum Gothica conferre possint" (54); "[...] quam ego [...] adiiciendam curavi ut studiosus lector Saxoniam veterem cum Anglica et nostrate Teutonica lingua conferre possit" (72); (after a list of Old Germanic words) "de quibus aliisque id genus quamplurimis vocabulis alius erit commodior ex professo disserendi locus" (67).

²⁵ "Geticae vero huius lingua tametsi magna sit cum vetere Teutonica affinitas, multi tamen hae inter se rerum appellationibus plane diversis dissentiunt. Quod enim Getae *fan*, hoc est Dominum, Teutones *Truchtin*, quod illi *Nasgand*, hoc est, salutare, hi *Heiland*. Quod illi *Thiunacu*, hoc est Puerum, hi *knecht* appellant, aliisque infinitis vocabulis inter se discrepant. Quaedam tamen ex iis quae mere Getica videntur, si eorum origo diligentius investigetur, convenientiam quandam cum Teutonicis habere deprehenduntur" (1597: VII–VIII).

"*aliquam enim eius esse cum Teutonica affinitatem vel ex eo constat quod multa vocabula utrique linguae inter se sunt communia.*"²⁶ As shown by the indefinite pronoun '*aliquis*' and the hyperbaton with '*affinitas*', the nature and extent of this affinity is not clearly defined. Elsewhere, Vulcanius wrongly equates the old Gallic language with the Germanic languages.²⁷ Basque, on the other hand, is considered unrelated to 'Teutonic'.²⁸ In line with the prevailing method in early modern times, similarities as well as dissimilarities between languages are mainly established at the lexical level.²⁹ Moreover, language names (such as Teutonic) are not consistently applied. This kind of confusion and terminological vagueness are typical features of early precomparative linguistics.

In the *Parergon* on Basque, Vulcanius describes the possible causes of language change.

Quam quidem linguam plerique Veterem Hispanicam fuisse arbitrantur, quae, cum in aliis illius regni provinciis, ob frequentes diversarum gentium irruptiones et multorum in eis saeculorum dominationem; ita fuerit corrupta ut nihil fere nativi retinuerit, eiectis nimirum indigenis, et coloniis eo deductis, Vizcayni eisque finitimae gentes linguam suam

²⁶ Page 87.

²⁷ Vulcanius edited the so-called "glossae Isidori" in his *Thesaurus utriusque linguae, hoc est Philoxeni, aliorumque veterum authorum Glossaria Lat.-Graeca et Graeco-Latina. Isidori Glossae Latinae. Veteres grammatici Latini et Graeci qui de proprietate et differentiis vocabulorum utriusque linguae scripserunt* (Lugduni Batavorum: 1600). He comments the entry "Gnabat, natus, generatus, filius, creatus vel enixus, lingua Gallica" (681) as follows: "Non video quo pacto haec vox ad Gallicam linguam referri possit, nisi veteri lingua Gallorum, sive Saxonica *knaeb*. Legamus quod etiam hodie Germanis ea significatione est in usu, et diminutivum *knabeling*. pro filio et filiolo. Mutato K vel C in G" (notae et castigationes in glossaria utriusque linguae, column 96).

²⁸ "Specimen hoc Cantabrigiae linguae parergon inscripsi, quod videlicet ad praesens institutum quo de Gothica et vetere Teutonica Saxonicaque lingua agimus, parum aut nihil pertineat; utpote nihil cum eis affinitatis habens" (89).

²⁹ When two words are equated, smaller variations at the phonic level are generally explained by the very powerful tool of the so-called *permutatio litterarum*. This model, the origins of which could be traced back to ancient style theory, describes and explains the phonic modifications in terms of operations such as deletion, addition, transmutation and inversion. David Cram, "Edward Lhuyd and the Doctrine of the Permutation of Letters", in *Sprachdiskussion und Beschreibung von Sprachen im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, G. Haßler, P. Schmitter (eds) (Münster: 1999), 317–335 offers more details on this system. Although Vulcanius does not make use of the *permutatio litterarum* in his *De literis et lingua*, he states in Cod. Vulc. 20, X fol. 2: "Hispanica vocabula facta a Latinis 4 modis". On the basis of a small scheme, he distinguishes between mutation, addition and detraction (I could not decipher the fourth term, which might be "composition"). See also note 27.

integram conservarunt. Quod quidem inde factum existimo, quod gentes bellicosissimae et regiones natura situque locorum munitissimae, vel ab exteris nationibus numquam ita fuerint subactae, ut indigenae sedes mutare fuerint coacti, vel quod externae nationes gentis indomitae ferocia et locorum asperitate deterritae, diutius ibi commorari noluerint.³⁰ [This language is generally considered to be the former ancient language of Spain. Whereas in the other provinces of that realm this language was so thoroughly corrupted by the successive invasions of various peoples and by an age-long foreign occupation, that hardly anything original was preserved—the indigenous population was chased away and colonies were founded—the Vizcayni and the neighbouring nations have kept their language integrally. I think this came about thanks to the warlike tribes and because the region offered very good protection through its nature and its location. Either the endemic population was never dominated by foreign powers to such an extent that they were forced to leave their mother country, or foreign nations were deterred by the fearlessness of the indomitable population and the rugged location and refused to settle there.]

While Vulcanius attributes considerable language changes to the consequences of massive invasions, he is also aware that language may become corrupted through commercial relations in peacetime. He relies, however, on the politics of language purism to defend the language from corruption.

Mansit itaque haec Vasconum lingua in hunc usque diem integra, tametsi ob multa cum vicinis Gallis commercia, peregrina etiam multa illius gentis vocabula in eam irrepserint. Crediderim tamen eos, si linguam suam excolere velint, perinde ac nos Belgae, nullius externae linguae adminiculo ad omnia animi sensa proprie apteque explicanda indigere.³¹ [Thus the Basque language retained its integrity to this very day, even though regular commercial relations with the neighbouring French introduced a large number of foreign words of that people into the Basque language. Nonetheless, I am inclined to believe that—if they want to cultivate their language—they do not need the help of any foreign language to express all their ideas in a proper and effective way, any more than we, Belgians, do.]

In keeping with prevailing ancient and Early Modern views, Vulcanius considers language change to be primarily a consequence of geographical movement, rather than a diachronic evolution.³² Another typical

³⁰ Page 90.

³¹ Pages 90–91.

³² See S. Auroux, “Representation and the Place of Linguistic Change before Comparative Grammar”, in *Leibniz, Humboldt, and the Origins of Comparativism: Pro-*

feature of Renaissance reasoning about language history was the intimate connection that was established between a nation's language and its script. To prove the antiquity of the Getes, for example, Vulcanius relied on the antiquity of their script, an argument he considered authoritative. Contrary to prevailing opinion, Vulcanius expressed the conviction that the Gothic alphabet was much older than the Arian bishop Ulfilas (Wulfila, 311–382), who had commissioned a Gothic translation of the Greek Bible.³³ Nonetheless, he did not regard languages without a written tradition as inferior.³⁴

All in all, Vulcanius did not elaborate theoretical issues relating to language history, language change and language similarity. In-depth discussions on language comparison remain conspicuously absent. In Vulcanius' view, language comparison is a self-evident activity, which does not need an elaborate methodology. *De literis et lingua* can be regarded as a remarkable collage of documentary language materials. A professional text editor, Vulcanius limits himself to the opening-up of sources.³⁵ Nevertheless, the importance of his collection of language specimens should not be overlooked. Today, it is hard to imagine how difficult it was to acquire text specimens or dictionaries of "exotic" languages such as Icelandic or Irish. From Josephus Justus Scaliger's letters, for instance, it can be gathered that a lack of learning materials prevented him from studying Arabic or Irish, which made him desperate. When the Leiden professor Marcus Zuerius van Boxhorn (1612–1653) received the dictionary of Welsh compiled by John Davies (†1644), the *Antiquae linguae Britannicae et linguae Latinae dictionary duplex*, published in 1632, he kissed it as an invaluable treasure.³⁶ According to Roger Van de Velde, *De literis et lingua* is an

ceedings of the International Conference, Rome, 25–28 September 1986, T. de Mauro, L. Formigari (eds) (Amsterdam: 1990), 213–238.

³³ "Ego vero, pace horum authorum, Geticarum literarum usum apud Getas longe ante Gulfilae tempora viguisse existimaverim, sed per Gulfilam Romanis primum innotuisse" (III).

³⁴ This could be inferred from his statement on Basque: "Propriam vero ac nativam Vasconum linguam cum multi ante annos non multos crediderint vel alioqui maligne sparserint, scribi non posse (quasi vero lingua quae pronuntiari potest scribi nequeat)" (91).

³⁵ It should be noted that neither in his edition of Isidorus (1577) nor in his *The-saurus utriusque linguae* do historical and comparative linguistics play an important role (apart from some scarce equations between Dutch and the classical languages in Vulcanius' notes).

³⁶ See T. Van Hal, 'Moedertalen en taalmoeders': *Methodologie, epistemologie en ideologie van het taalvergelijkend onderzoek in de renaissance, met bijzondere aandacht*

extremely important dissertation.³⁷ The publication of Persian, Basque and Rotwelsch language samples and text specimens of the Gothic *Codex Argenteus* (the name of which appears here for the first time) was previously unheard of in the Netherlands. Even today, Vulcanius' work is still of considerable interest with regard to languages that are historically ill-documented in the past (such as Basque and Romani). By offering a lot of language "teasers",³⁸ Vulcanius' *opusculum* provided a powerful stimulus for further research to *studiosi linguarum*.³⁹

For the rest of this paper, I will argue that Vulcanius' extensive network and the academic context provided by the University of Leiden were essential for the genesis of his book on the language of the Goths. Furthermore, there are many indications that Vulcanius was pivotal in disseminating other documentary texts with linguistic relevance.

Vulcanius emphasised that he acquired many of the text specimens that he published from his friends.⁴⁰ His interaction with Josephus Justus Scaliger (1540–1609), one of the most prolific polyglots of the 16th and 17th century, for example, proved to be very fruitful. Scaliger is said to have provided one of the four 'Gothic' alphabets,⁴¹ and he is also acknowledged as the source of the 'Romani' word list.⁴² Scaliger may also have exchanged some of his own Gothic manuscript materials or may have helped to provide documentation on Welsh or Basque.⁴³ In addition, the only preliminary poem to appear in the book is by Scaliger. All these facts indicate that Scaliger played a major role in Vulcanius' project.

Vulcanius does not offer information on the background of all his sources. He is very unclear about the origin of the anonymous dissertations on the Gothic language, stating that he acquired a number of

voor de bijdrage van de humanisten uit de Lage Landen. (Leuven: 2008) Dissertatie Katholieke Universiteit, 172; 345.

³⁷ See Van de Velde, *De studie van het Gotisch in de Nederlanden*, 67.

³⁸ Vulcanius often makes use of the word *gustus* when giving an example of a language (for instance, 87, 97).

³⁹ Elsewhere, Tom Deneire and I have discussed the extent to which this book constituted an important impulse for Justus Lipsius in writing his influential letter against Becanus. See T. Deneire and T. Van Hal, *Lipsius tegen Becanus*, p. 124.

⁴⁰ See note 5.

⁴¹ I.e. Runes 46.

⁴² Page 105.

⁴³ See Van de Velde, *De studie van het Gotisch in de Nederlanden* and Chotzen, *Primitieve keltistiek in de Nederlanden*.

mutilated documents after the “public demolition of the Belgian libraries” and that he did not have a definite idea about their authorship.⁴⁴ J.W. Schulte has identified the Flemish humanist Cornelius Gualtherus (†1582) as the author of both treatises.⁴⁵ For another important manuscript, Vulcanius was probably indebted to his former chief, Georgius Cassander (1513–1566), who was a close friend of Gualtherus. On page 54 in *De Literis*, Vulcanius claims to have a *Harmonia Evangelica* at his disposal with a “vetustissima interpretatione Teutonica”, which he intended to edit integrally (sc. Tatian’s *Diatessaron*).⁴⁶ It is interesting to note that Vulcanius planned to publish some of his text specimens, especially in the field of Old Germanic. The *Diatessaron* project, however, never materialised and the original manuscript was lost. Nonetheless, Vulcanius had made a copy of this manuscript, which is now preserved in the Bodleian Library.⁴⁷

It is also possible that Vulcanius participated in the Willeram project set up by Paulus Merula (1558–1607) and Pancratius Castricomius (†1619). Willy Sanders has demonstrated that, apart from Castricomius’ Willeram manuscript, at least one other Willeram manuscript was used as a touchstone in the edition process. Indeed, Vulcanius mentions having such a manuscript at his disposal.⁴⁸ According to Sanders, this manuscript was later owned by Gerardus Johannes

⁴⁴ “De hac Getarum lingua pervenerunt ad me veluti lacerae quaedam tabulae publico Belgarum Bibliothecarum naufragio Commentarioli docti cuiusdam Viri anonymi [...]” (IV). On the demolition of libraries, see e.g. P. Schneiders, *Nederlandse bibliotheekgeschiedenis: van librije tot virtuele bibliotheek* (Den Haag: 1997), 59.

⁴⁵ J.W. Schulte, “(3) Gothica Minora”, *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 24 (1880), 324–355.

⁴⁶ “E cuius Harmoniae Evangelicae vetustissima interpretatione Teutonica depromam nonnulla, quae huius linguae studiosi cum Gothica conferre possint, eaque sese oblectare tantisper dum Harmoniam illam integram Latine pariter et Teutonice edam” (54). See also page 60.

⁴⁷ Oxford Bodleian Library, 5125 [Ms. Junius 13]). Alfons Dewitte, “Bonaventura Vulcanius Brugensis (1538–1614): A Bibliographic Description of the Editions 1575–1612”, *Lias* 8 (1981), 190–191, mentions two letters written in 1606 and 1607 about the printing intentions of the *Tatiani Harmonia Evangelica Gothica Versio* (Cod. Vulc. 106 II, to M. Velsler, 1606 and to NN, April 9, 1607). See also P. Ganz, “Cod. Junius 13 und die althochdeutsche Tatianübersetzung”, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 91 (1969), 28–76 and W.L. Petersen, *Tatian’s Diatessaron: Its Creation, Dissemination, Significance, and History in Scholarship* (Leiden: 1994), 95–97, on the eventual fate of this manuscript.

⁴⁸ “Exstat etiam apud me vetustissimum exemplar MS. Cantici Canticorum cum expositione e Teutonico et Latino sermone mixta” (57). See W. Sanders, *Der Leidener Willeram. Untersuchungen zu Handschrift, Text und Sprachform* (München: 1974), 76. Sanders does not discuss the possible origins of Vulcanius’ manuscript.

Vossius (1577–1649) and subsequently by the Dordrecht pastor Abraham Mylius (1563–1637). Since then, it has disappeared.⁴⁹ Vulcanius initially planned to edit the text himself, but he abandoned this intention when he learnt that Merula had a similar plan.⁵⁰ There is some epistolographic evidence that sheds more light on the collaboration between Vulcanius and Merula.⁵¹ In addition, Vulcanius had a manuscript of the so-called *Annoled* [Song of Anno] at his disposal, from which he published a small part.⁵² It would take more than 30 years before Martin Opitz (1597–1639) published a complete version. Since then, both manuscripts have disappeared. Finally, Vulcanius may have played a role in the transmission of the so-called ‘Wachten-donck Psalms’ (written in Old Dutch) as well, but firm indications are lacking.⁵³

As to the small Persian section, on page 87 Vulcanius acknowledges his debt to Franciscus Raphelengius (1539–1597), who combined his

⁴⁹ Mylius is the author of *Lingua Belgica sive de linguae illius communitate tum cum plerisque aliis, tum praesertim cum Latina, Graeca, Persica, deque communitatis illius causis, tum de linguae illius origine et latissima per nationes quamplurimas diffusionem* (Lugduni Batavorum: 1612). Although Vulcanius composed a preliminary poem for this book, he is nowhere cited in it by Mylius. Cod. Vulc. 21: *verba Gallica* (ff. 1–3) and *ex Abr. Myl. lingua Belgica* (fol. 7–10) show that Vulcanius was still collecting words at the end of his life.

⁵⁰ “Ego itaque cum nudam hanc Teutonicae in Canticum Canticorum ecphraseos editionem iam dudum in animo habuissem: tamen cum Latinam Willerammi expositionem mihi deesse viderem, eamque apud virum quendam doctum mihi que amicissimum exstare intelligerem, qui ea coniunctim in publicum edere constituisset, iisque insuper adicere suas in Teutonicam Ecphrasin observationes ac Notas, quibus linguam illam illustravit, quas iam paratas mihi ostendit Cl. V. Paulus G.F.P.N. Merula Hist. Prof. collega et amicus meus, libens ei cessi, et a mei codicis Teutonici editione destiti” (59–60).

⁵¹ In a letter addressed to the British antiquarian William Camden (1551–1623), dated on the second of June 1598, Paulus Merula states: “Specimen Hibernicae linguae suo caractere expressum, quod petis traderem Vulcanio nostro, nondum accepi. Borsalius negabat se vidisse. Alioquin ego aveo videre, si quid aliud. Nam varias illas linguas in meo opera singulis regnis et provinciis adscribere omnino est animus. Singularum specimen aliquod. Multas iam collegi, exceptis vestrarum insularum Hiberniae, Orcadum etc. Biblia in veterem linguam Britannicam translata pollicitus est se mihi adlaturum meus Ayerus.” This letter shows that Vulcanius might have thought to add an Irish text specimen as well, if he had managed to acquire one. Merula integrated some Bretonic and Welsh text specimens into his *Cosmographiae generalis libri tres* (1605).

⁵² Pages 62–64.

⁵³ T. Van Hal, “Een geurtje rond de Wachtendonckse Psalmen? Een omstreeden bijdrage van Justus Lipsius tot de Germaanse filologie”, in *Iam illustravit omnia: Justus Lipsius als lievelingsauteur van het Plantijnse Huis*, J. De Landtsheer, P. Delsaerdt (eds) (Antwerpen: 2006) *De gulden passer* 84, 41.

profession as a printer at Leiden with a professorship in oriental studies. Raphelengius is particularly important for having launched the 'Persian-Germanic' theory, that Vulcanius was the first to publish, albeit in a very concise form. Finally, the name of Marnix van Sint-Aldegonde (1538/1540–1598) is mentioned in connection with the first Runic alphabet in the *Quadruplex Alphabetum Gothicum*.⁵⁴ It should be noted that Marnix must have been a prolific advocate of the Persian-Germanic theory. As a polyglot who knew at least eight foreign languages, it is no surprise that he actively supported his close collaborator's enterprise as well.⁵⁵

Not all the text specimens offered by Vulcanius appeared there in print for the first time. For some of his sources, he could rely on printed books. Nevertheless, the publication of the influential and diverse *De literis* was rendered possible only by the generous assistance of many humanist colleagues. From this perspective, the *De literis* could be regarded as the fruitful outcome of the inspiring and fraternal atmosphere among the members of the young Leiden University.

⁵⁴ "Primum Alphabetum Gothicum quod C.L.V. Daniel Rogersius a D. Ioanne Bilde praefecto regio in Gothlandia insula ad se missum anno 1556 Nobiliss. Amplissimoq. viro D. Philippo Marnixio Sanct. Aldegondii Domino communicavit" (43). On the role of Daniel Rogers (1538–1590) in acquiring Runic alphabets, see the contribution of Kees Dekker, pp. 413–451 in this volume, "The Runes in Bonaventura Vulcanius *De literis & lingua Getarum siue Gothorum* (1597): Provenance and Origins."

⁵⁵ See Mylius, *De lingua Belgica*, 50, 88, 92; J.W. Schulte, "(2) Gothica Minora", *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 23–24 (1879), 331; Van Hal, 'Moedertalen en taalmoeders', 150–151.