

# IN MEMORIAM PROFESSOR JAN ROEGIERS

Cor sapientis quaerit doctrinam  
*Book of Proverbs, 15:14*

Friday 12 July 2013, a day full of summer light, was darkened by the sad news that Professor Jan Roegiers, one of the founding fathers and one of the editors with unflinching zeal of this Journal, departed this life. An exceptional man and scholar has left us. Yet, not without a clear testament and an impressive legacy.

As a professor in Early Modern History both at the Faculties of Arts and Theology at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Jan Roegiers was not only a most gifted and erudite specialist in the History of the Church, the History of the Low Countries, the History of Renaissance Humanism at Leuven University and the History of the Book. He was also extraordinarily well acquainted with the history of Jansenism, the Enlightenment, Ultramontanism and the Early Modern nobility of the Southern Low Countries. He was much more than a generous teacher for generations of students in history, much more than an inspiring and generous *Doktorvater* of talented PhD students. As chief librarian of Leuven University Library from 1981 until 1996 he gave a new impetus as well as a fresh and unique brilliance to a historical library which had to suffer both from the atrocities of the Second World War and the division of Leuven University in 1968. In addition, Jan Roegiers was the first University Archivist of Leuven University, a task which he fulfilled from 1975 until his retirement in 2009. The fact that, in 2013, the Archives of Leuven University have been included in the list of UNESCO World Heritage, bespeaks his talent, dedication and success.

In order to open this rich heritage for a wider public, Professor Roegiers published specialized and more general studies alike. A survey of the wide range of topics studied and discussed by him, can be read in the *Festschrift* which was offered to him on the occasion of his retirement: *The Quintessence of Lives. Intellectual Biographies in the Low Countries presented to Jan Roegiers*, ed. P. Delsaert e.a. (Turnhout, 2010). He equally initiated and elaborated dozens of exhibitions on various topics related to the (cultural) history of Leuven University and the Low Countries. Already as a PhD student, he was asked to contribute to the great memorial exhibition of *550 jaar KU Leuven*, an exhibition in which he presented numerous new findings and in which he integrated unknown archival and printed sources.

Due to his phenomenal knowledge and altruistic dedication, Professor Roegiers was a welcome member of editorial boards of several important journals

devoted to the History of the Church, the history of the eighteenth century and archivalistics (e.g. *Revue d'Histoire ecclésiastique*; *Trajecta: tijdschrift voor de geschiedenis van het katholiek leven in de Nederlanden*; *Documentatieblad van de Werkgroep Achttiende Eeuw*). Here too, his talent to combine a diversity of tasks is notable.

One cannot, however, exaggerate Jan Roegiers' importance for this Journal. From its early start in 1974, he was an active pioneering force in the editorial board of *Lias*, then still entitled *Lias: Sources and Documents Relating to the Early Modern History of Ideas*. *Lias*, it must be said, was a brainchild of many. Yet, the young historian Jan Roegiers was still a PhD student when, together with Hans Bots, Paul Bockstaele, Chris Heesakkers, Cor Rademaker, R. Crahay, A. Th. M. van Deursen, B.L. Meulenbroek, R. De Moulin, J.A.G. Tans, J. Ver-cruysse and J.J. de Vet, he sought a possibility to 'publish sources and documents of limited scope, which are too short to publish separately and which cannot be placed in the usual professional journals'. From the very first volume onwards, Jan Roegiers was one of the editors of *Lias*; from 1993 until 2009 he was president of the editorial board. During his full academic career Jan Roegiers gave the best of his efforts to make this Journal into a what it has become: a unique journal in which a variety of little treasures have been edited, presented, and discussed. A variety which, for a great part, reflects the variety in Jan Roegiers' own scholarly interests and in which he was that unmatched specialist.

Still, we do not only lose a superb scholar and colleague. Anyone who has met Jan Roegiers has witnessed a man of great prudence, erudition, culture and *courtoisie*, a man of style with a warm heart, great empathy and sincere interest in the thoughts and dreams of others. The editors of *Lias*, past and present, can only be deeply grateful to have had this man as our pioneer, guide, companion and mentor.

Jan PAPY

Leuven, 19 February 2014

## EDITORIAL

This special issue of *Lias* is dedicated to Libertus Fromondus (1587–1653), a prominent intellectual from the southern part of the Low Countries. Fromondus was born in 1587 Haccourt, near Visé, between Liège and Maastricht. From 1637 to his death in 1653 he worked at the University of Leuven. He left an extensive scholarly oeuvre that reflects, in quite a unique way, the philosophical and theological debates in the Low Countries in the first half of the seventeenth century. Fromondus interfered in the controversy concerning the new astronomical views of Nicholas Copernicus. His position in this controversy is quite remarkable, since he developed from an enthusiastic adherent of heliocentrism (in his *Meteorologicorum libri sex*, Antwerp 1627) to a forceful defender of geocentrism (in his polemical writings against Philips and Jacob Lansbergen, 1632 & 1634). Moreover, Fromondus's name is directly related to the history of Humanism. As editor and commentator of Seneca's *Quaestiones naturales* and *Apokolokyntosis* (or: *Ludus de morte Claudii*) he made an important contribution to the revival of the ancient literary and philosophical revival in the West. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Fromondus is one of the protagonists in the history of early Jansenism. From 1628 onwards, the year of his doctorate, he was one of the collaborators of Cornelius Jansenius. At Jansenius' death, in 1638 (as Bishop of Ypres), Fromondus took it upon him to prepare Jansenius' unachieved *magnum opus*, *Augustinus*, for publication. Many of Fromondus works (most notably his commentaries on the *Song of songs* and St Paul's *Epistles*, but also his *Brevis anatomia hominis*, Leuven 1641) discuss questions of freedom of will and human action, two of the key issues of Jansenism.

The papers collected in this volume were originally presented at the international workshop *Science, Theology & Humanism in Seventeenth-Century Louvain: The Life and Career of Libertus Fromondus (d. 1653)*. During this two-day conference, organized in Leuven on 23 and 24 October 2008 by Prof. dr. Martin Stone (in that period still attached to the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven) and Prof. dr. Paul Bakker (Radboud University Nijmegen), specialists from different fields convened in order to exchange new ideas about various aspects of Fromondus' thought. The Leuven workshop showed the need to re-evaluate Fromondus' intellectual journeys and 'scientific' positions, and to adopt varying perspectives by scholars working in different fields. It gives us great pleasure that the contributors to the conference have accepted our invitation to rework their papers into articles and we are very grateful to the editors of *Lias* for taking the effort of considering our proposal. Their professional way of handling the

contributions as separate articles to be peer reviewed as journal articles, was a welcome surplus. The articles on Fromondus will be published in two special issues. The present issue contains the contributions by Wim François, Jan Papy, Geert Vanpaemel and Theo Verbeek. The second issue, to be published in 2015, is scheduled to contain four more articles. It is our sincere hope that the two special issues devoted to Fromondus will serve the community of scholars working in the fields of History of Science, Theology, Philosophy, and Renaissance Humanism.

Prof. dr. Paul Bakker (Radboud University Nijmegen)

Prof. dr. Jan Papy (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven)