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A PROFESSOR AT WORK:

HADRIANUS AMEROTIUS (c.1495–1560) AND THE STUDY OF GREEK

IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY LOUVAIN

Raf Van Rooy

Est in eodem collegio Adrianus Suesionius, praeter exactam utriusque litteraturae peritiam, et philosophiae gnarus et iuris Caesarei non ignarus, moribus mire candidis.¹ (Erasmus in De Vocht 1951–5: IV, 257 n.1)

In due time, [Amerotius's] nomination as Greek professor became an accomplished fact, and the Trilingue thus secured the collaboration of one of the best Hellenists, and one of the most devoted pedagogues of the sixteenth century. (De Vocht 1951–5: IV, 253)

Few sixteenth-century Hellenists can boast of such words of praise by such eminent scholars as Desiderius Erasmus (1466/7/9–1536) and Henry De Vocht (1878–1962). Yet even fewer Hellenists have been denied the scholarly attention they deserve. Erasmus's and De Vocht's words stand in striking contrast with the relative lack of interest in Amerotius's life and work.² Because of the considerable amount of research that still needs to be done—for instance, a thorough study of his

¹ "In the same college [the Lily in Louvain], there is Adrien of Soissons, who, apart from his accurate skill in both literatures, is both an expert of philosophy and not inexperienced in imperial law [and he has] marvellously impeccable manners" (my translation).

² The most important modern studies (all partial) are Nève (1856: 207–10), De Vocht (1951–5: I, 272; II, 194–5; II, 223; III, 294; III, 578; IV, 221; IV, 245–7; IV, 252–68; IV, 300; IV, 311; IV, 352; IV, 369; IV, 378–9; IV, 426; IV, 438; IV, 444), Hoven (1970: 11–14; 1985: 1–19), Antony (1984: 50–53), Hummel (1999), Swiggers (2000), King (2001: 147–51), Botley (2010: 47–8), Swiggers & Van Rooy (2015), and many of my notes in Papy (2017). See also Van Rooy & Van Hal (2018: *passim*).

Greek grammar is still lacking,³ I can only offer a partial antidote to this deplorable neglect here. I aim to provide a brief updated account of his life and work, first and foremost as a Hellenist and teacher of Greek, without, however, neglecting his other didactic, clerical, and legal services. To achieve this in as surveyable a manner as possible, I start with a concise biographic account, followed by a more extensive discussion of Amerotius's Greek studies and teaching, and its embedment in his overall profile as a humanist scholar. I conclude by raising questions about the study of Greek by scholars such as Amerotius, with specific attention to early modern conceptions of "the Greek language" and its position in Renaissance scholarship, which I believe are particularly promising avenues for further research.

Before moving on to Amerotius's life and work, it is worthwhile to linger here briefly on Greek studies in the Low Countries before his arrival in Louvain in late 1513 in order to gain deeper insight into his importance and contribution. In the fifteenth century, few Greek was taught in the Low Countries, a major exception being the German humanist Alexander Hegius's (1439/40–1498) tutoring. Hegius had learned Greek from the Groningen humanist Rodolphus Agricola (1443/44–1485), who had learned Greek in Ferrara (nowadays Italy; IJsewijn 1988), and would subsequently teach the basics of the language for about 15 years (1483–98) at the Deventer Latin school, of which he was rector. One of Hegius's first students there was Desiderius Erasmus.⁴ However, for the largescale study of Greek in the Low Countries, we have to wait until the early sixteenth century. Louvain was a particularly important intellectual centre in this context. At first, only occasional (non-permanent) and private lessons without any real impact took place there. For instance, around 1500, two Greek noblemen were procuring some basically fruitless teaching in that city. It was only with the arrival of Amerotius from Paris that in Louvain—and by extension in large parts of the Low Countries—Greek came to be seriously studied in the typical Renaissance spirit (De Vocht 1951–5: 1.271–3). Indeed, his private lessons, combining expertise with clarity, were a hugely important channel through which students in the Low Countries (especially the southern part) acquired knowledge of Greek before the *Collegium Trilingue*'s (°1517) public lessons.

³ In spite of Botley (2010: 47–8).

⁴ See Bedaux (1998: 15–71) for an extensive biography of Hegius. Hegius is also the author of a poem on the utility of learning Greek (in which the imperative *discito Graece* occurs as a refrain), immensely popular during the Renaissance.

*Hadrianus Amerotius of Soissons (1490s–1560): A Versatile Scholar*⁵

Amerotius was born in (or near) Soissons (nowadays northern France) somewhere in the 1490s—his precise year of birth remains unknown. His father was a Flemish migrant called Jacques Guennevelle (or Quennevelle), also called “Amerot laboureur,” and his mother, Ysabeau Docosse, was a native of Mollins, near Soissons. His family was poor, which forced him to make a living of his own early on. In 1512–3, Amerotius was in Paris, studying Greek with the Italian humanist Girolamo Aleandro (1480–1542), with whom he corresponded later in his life. In November 1513, as a “pauperculus iuvenis” (“poor youngster”), Amerotius matriculated at the University of Louvain, being enrolled as “Adrianus de Suetione” (“Adrien of Soissons”). He entered the College of the Lily, one of the four pedagogies of the university’s arts faculty, where he soon started to teach Greek to his fellow-students, probably as early as 1514. His teaching activity was pioneering for Louvain: Amerotius was the first to give quasi-permanent private lessons in that language. In 1516, Amerotius promoted to the degree of Master of Arts and was his year’s *primus*. Yet he stayed at the Lily, combining his private teaching with a law study; he soon obtained the degree of Licentiate in this subject.

By June 1522, Amerotius was a priest as well as a professor of philosophy, teaching Aristotle’s *Physica*. Also around this time, his friend Paschasius Berselius (ca. 1480–1535) gave him an astrolabe (an astronomic device used to determine the positions of celestial bodies), perhaps as a present to congratulate him with his appointment.⁶ This seems all the more likely since, in his *Physica*, Aristotle touches on issues of astronomy; this would make Berselius’s gift to Amerotius very appropriate indeed. We do not know how long Amerotius held his teaching position, but it is certain that, before long, he also became the preceptor of the sons (and some other relatives) of Nicolas Perrenot de Granvelle (1486–1550), the secretary of Charles V (1500–1558). This task preoccupied him for a large

⁵ This overview is mainly based on De Vocht (1951–5: I, 272–4; IV, 252–65), Antony (1984: 50–3), Hoven (1985: 1–6), and new data which have emerged from my own examination of Amerotius’s unedited correspondence with Antoine Perrenot; see Appendix B for a first edition of one of these letters, which offers us a unique window on Amerotius’s varied pedagogical programme.

⁶ The astrolabe bears the inscription: “Hadriano Amerotio Berselius me dono dedit. 1522.” See King (2001: 141–2).

part of his life and only ended around 1550.⁷ Thanks to the (incomplete) preservation of the correspondence between Amerotius and Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle (1517–1586), Nicolas’s son, we are best informed about this aspect of Amerotius’s life. In his capacity of preceptor, he was in contact with many leading humanists and noblemen. In the years 1529–31, for instance, he travelled with the renowned Antwerp humanist Joachim Fortius Ringelbergius (ca. 1499–ca. 1531/6) to Paris and Orléans (and maybe also to Bourges). Ringelbergius praised Amerotius as a *vir utriusque linguae peritissimus* (“a man very skilled in both languages”).⁸ Yet it is probable that Amerotius also knew Hebrew: in June 1537, Antoine Perrenot addressed him as “Master Hadrianus Amerotius, teacher, very skilled in the three languages and master of both laws,” which very probably refers to the three “sacred languages.”⁹ After his travels (in the years 1532–3), Amerotius acted as a lawyer for the Brederode family at the decease of Charlotte de Brederode.¹⁰ Around the same time, Amerotius seems to have set up a boarding-house in Louvain, where he accommodated and educated his pupils in preparation for university, both members of the Granvelle family and other students.¹¹ He was the private teacher of Antoine, Thomas (1521–1571), Jérôme (1524–1554), Charles (1531–1567), and Frédéric (1536–1602) Perrenot. He also taught their first cousins Charles and Pierre Bordey.¹² In 1534, he corresponded from Louvain with Nicolaus Olahus (1493–1568), the secretary of Mary of Hungary (1505–1558) residing in Brussels.

For the years 1535–42, we only have a few snippets of information. Amerotius probably continued his boarding-house activities and is said to have given a series of sermons for a period of two years. Recently rediscovered letters reveal that Amerotius also travelled during this period. Between early 1536 and late 1537, he was in Dole in the County of Burgundy, accompanying Granvelle’s brother Jérôme and another relative of his, who likely studied at the local university and no doubt visited

⁷ Antony (1984: 53).

⁸ See Ringelbergius (1531: 616); Hoven (1985: 2). His Dutch name is Joachim Sterck van Ringelbergh.

⁹ In the original Latin letter (written in Padua), the address reads: “A[ntonius] P[errenotus] trium linguarum peritissimo et utriusque iuris licentiatu D[omi]no Adriano Amerotio praeceptori.” See BPR, Ms. II/2798, 54^v.

¹⁰ He was the executor of her will and had the “full power” to act in the best interests of the family when several heirs started to take legal steps (De Vocht 1951–5: IV, 258).

¹¹ De Vocht (1951–5: IV, 258)

¹² A number of these pupils are mentioned in the letter edited in Appendix B. For Pierre Bordey, see Castan (1888: 21–30).

Jérôme and Antoine's uncle Johannes Mauricius, senator in the city.¹³ Perhaps he was also supervising the studies of Maximilien Morillon (1517–1586), a close friend of Antoine Perrenot who had studied law in Louvain, but finished his studies in Dole in 1538.¹⁴ Around 1539/40, Amerotius was in Louvain again, inciting Gerardus Mercator (1512–1594) to publish a new globe.¹⁵ In the years 1542–5, he was teaching Greek at the College of the Castle (or Fortress), which was, like the Lily, an arts college of the University of Louvain. The establishment of such language courses in the arts colleges was no doubt inspired by the example of the *Collegium Trilingue*. This institute for advanced studies in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew had been founded in 1517 under the will of Hieronymus van Busleyden (ca. 1470–1517) and by the efforts of, among others, Desiderius Erasmus, its “spiritual founder.”¹⁶

In 1543, Amerotius was involved in a trial with Jan Heems of Armentières (d. 1560), the regent of the College of the Lily and his arch enemy (“mon perpetuel adversaire”), over clerical privileges.¹⁷ In September 1545, he had to substitute the professor of Greek at the *Trilingue*, Rutger[us] Rescius (ca. 1495–1545), who was seriously ill and passed away on October 2. Amerotius succeeded him and thus became the second professor of Greek at the *Collegium Trilingue*. His eventual appointment, however, took some time, because the approval of the last living executor of Busleyden's will was required. Amerotius's inaugural oration as an interim professor is extant, a unique document showing a humble scholar who wanted to give the board of the *Trilingue* the freedom to choose whomever they wanted as Rescius's successor.¹⁸ He did so by reading a brief text during this period of transition: Menelaus's *Declamatio* on Helena (= *Declamationes* 3) by Libanius the Sophist.

In June 1546, there was a rumour in Louvain that Amerotius was about to enter the Franciscan Order, which Charles Perrenot denied in a letter to his brother Antoine.¹⁹ In January 1548, Amerotius wrote to his (former) pupil, Antoine, to report about the progress made by Antoine's brothers and other relatives, and about other services to the Granvelle family (see Appendix B for an edition and translation of this letter). He seems to allude to his Greek courses at the *Trilingue* in this

¹³ BPR, Ms. II/2298, 6^{r-v} & Ms. II/2794, 42^r.

¹⁴ See Pouillet (1877: 12); Piot (1899).

¹⁵ BPR, Ms. II/2298, 306^r.

¹⁶ On the *Collegium Trilingue*, see most recently Papy (2018).

¹⁷ BPR, Ms. II/2317, 188^r. For Heems, see Guenther (1995).

¹⁸ See Van den Gheyn (1909) for the *editio princeps*. Van Rooy (2017a) offers a corrected edition with Dutch translation.

¹⁹ BPR, Ms. 7912/92 (*pace* Antony 1984: 52–3).

letter, which he mentions together with Petrus Nannius's (1496/1500–1557) Latin courses (see Appendix B n. 63). In 1550, the year of Nicolas Perrenot's death, there came an end to Amerotius's employment as teacher of the Granvelle family. At the same time, he asked Antoine to give him either a position at the college of Besançon, a city he might have visited in the late 1530s, or a parish in Armentières in northern France (Antony 1984: 52–3). He was probably also travelling again in 1550 (perhaps to northern France?); in October of that year, Theodor(ic)us Langius (d. 1578), who later succeeded Amerotius as professor of Greek in 1560, took over his lessons at the *Trilingue*. In September 1557, Amerotius is mentioned as the patron of Suffridus Petri (1527–1597), the later secretary and librarian of Antoine Perrenot, when he was cardinal.²⁰ In December 1559, he wrote his will, which he changed at various occasions during that same month. He died on 14 January 1560 and was buried at St Gertrude's Abbey Church in Louvain. Part of his property went to his family, another part was intended to be used for theological scholarships in a college to be founded, and yet another part was destined for the recently established College of Ghent, a grammar school in Louvain. Due to circumstances (i.e. unresolved debts owed to Amerotius and objections of Amerotius's relatives), his plan for a college never materialised, although part of his fortune was used for scholarships in two other Louvain colleges. All means of Amerotius's foundation were, however, lost in the chaos of the 1580s.

Amerotius as a Teacher and Hellenist

Let us now look at Amerotius's colourful teaching career. He taught philosophy, Latin,²¹ (catholic) theology,²² law, and even Flemish. I will not have the opportunity to discuss all these aspects of Amerotius's teaching career here, but I do want to point out the remarkable fact that he taught Flemish as a kind of extra-curricular course to foreign pupils lodging with him and specifically to Charles Perrenot de Granvelle, one of the sons of the imperial secretary Nicolas. In a 1548 letter to Charles's brother, Antoine, Amerotius explained how he had been teaching Flemish in his boarding-house:

²⁰ De Vocht (1951–5: IV, 267; IV, 355).

²¹ BPR, Ms. II/2317, 187^{r-v}. See also Isaac (1586: 1^v); De Vocht (1951–5: IV, 300).

²² See De Vocht (1951–5: IV, 300).

As to Flemish, I have prescribed that we read, master Jean, I and the children, every day after dinner and after supper, histories in Flemish, and I will arrange in this manner that they will know the language. There is absolutely no hope at all to make them learn it by talking with the domestic servants, as they do not want to make use of it, even though they understand it well. And recently, on New Year's Day, the protonotary said, in the presence of Viron, that he did not at all like the country and that, if he would be out of it, he would never again return. Thus, he indicated that since he did not at all want to stay in the land, he had but little use for the language. Never had I heard such things from him. And the abovementioned lord Viron and I, we reminded him of his duties and we brought him back to his best senses. Milord and you can understand by this that it is rather difficult for a hunter to catch the hare when the dog does not want to run. And to remedy it, I will catch the hare myself and I will tie him up by his foot and I will make him understand, by means of the histories we read and translate every day, what is said in Flemish, and only a small quarter of an hour every time, so that we do not at all interrupt the other studies too much.²³

This amusing anecdote reveals that renowned teachers and humanists such as Amerotius were also appealed to by their patrons when more practical linguistic competences needed to be acquired; in this case, the main goal was to overcome problems caused by language barriers, undesirable for someone like Charles who was destined for a political-clerical career in Flemish-speaking territory.²⁴ Be that as it may, Amerotius is most renowned for his teaching of the Ancient Greek language and literature.

²³ See Appendix B for the French original of this letter, accompanied by a full English translation.

²⁴ See Appendix B for text and translation. This tutoring of Flemish can be understood as consistent with the ideal of the cultivated polyglot dignitary active on the multilingual political scene of Habsburg Europe, which was embodied in an exemplary fashion by Antoine, who "Mithridatem quoque ipsum [...] cognitione linguarum aequabat: nam praeter vernaculam, hoc est, Gallicam, ac praeter Latinam et Graecam, quas puer in scholis didicerat; Italam insuper, Hispanam, Belgicam et Germanicam examussim callebat" (Saccus 1586: 18–9). It seems plausible that Antoine had enjoyed similar classes in the Dutch language, perhaps also under Amerotius's supervision.

Amerotius taught Greek more or less continuously for about 45 years (1514–60), but unfortunately, we have little information about large parts of this period. In any case, it is certain that he taught Greek at the Pedagogy of the Lily in the years 1514–21, at the Pedagogy of the Castle in the years 1542–5, and at the *Collegium Trilingue* in the years 1545–60. This leaves us with a gap of just over twenty years between 1521 and 1542. It seems probable, however, that Amerotius regularly taught Greek during that period too, for instance in private lessons for members of the Granvelle family and other students. Antoine, therefore, is likely to have learned Greek from him in this period. It is moreover possible that Amerotius was still teaching Greek privately as late as 1548 (see Appendix B n. 63).

The passage from Erasmus's letter quoted at the outset of this paper shows that in 1521, Erasmus used Amerotius's expertise in the Greek language and literature as a means of attracting pupils to come and study in Louvain. What is more, Amerotius was not only acquainted with many important Hellenists of his age (for example, Aleandro, Erasmus, and Ringelbergius), but also taught the Greek language and literature to many prominent figures, including the theologian Guilielmus Lindanus (1525–1588), the Frisian humanist Suffridus Petri, the famous botanist Carolus Clusius (1526–1609), and the Spanish philologist Sebastián Fox Morcillo (ca. 1526/28–1560).²⁵

Amerotius's oral didactic method is well reflected in his 1534 correspondence with Nicolaus Olahus, who had asked him about the interpretation of a passage in the *Parasitus*, a dialogue by Lucian. The professor's response reveals his method of teaching Greek texts in some detail.²⁶ His letter suggests that his teaching method was traditional in that it consisted of (1) literal, word-for-word translation of the Greek text, (2) paraphrase, and (3) explanation of contents and *realia* (scholia). In at least one respect, Amerotius's method diverges from general practice. This concerns his remarkably close attention to the interconnection and internal coherence of Greek clauses in the passages under scrutiny. Whether this characterises his teaching style generally is difficult to say. In this particular case, the teacher's attention for coherence might very well have been inspired by the subject of the passage: dialectics, the art of reasoning. So what kind of Greek texts did Amerotius discuss in his actual classes? Unfortunately, not much information on this issue is available. His inaugural oration of 1545 does show, however, that very much like his predecessor Rescius, he did

²⁵ See De Vocht (1951–5: IV, 352; IV, 369; IV, 379; IV, 438).

²⁶ Amerotius (1875: 467–71).

not shy away from reading later, and often lesser-known, Greek texts—by Lucian and Libanius—instead of what we consider to be the “great classics” (such as Homer’s epic poems or works from Athens’ “golden age”).

Apart from his teaching, Amerotius also produced didactic writings with a long-term effect: his printed grammatical work. At a very early age (ca. 1514–20), he had already drawn up precepts for learning Greek in manuscript, based on Greek grammarians as well as his personal reading of Greek literature. He later rearranged his precepts in a methodical and concise manner and published them with Thierry Martens (1446/7–1534) in 1520.²⁷ Although only one edition of Amerotius’s *Compendium Graecae grammatices* was issued, it nevertheless had a long-term effect. This is for several reasons. First, his *Compendium* circulated for several decades in the sixteenth century. This is shown by the fact that Amerotius is mentioned among the approved grammarians of Greek in an imperial book catalogue published in Louvain in 1550 alongside three other renowned Hellenists of his lifetime: Nicolaus Clenardus from Diest (ca. 1493/5–1542), Johannes Varennius from Mechelen (1462–1536), and the Swiss humanist Jacobus Ceperinus (1499/1500–1525).²⁸ What is more, early modern and modern scholars alike have not ceased to emphasise the merits of Amerotius’s introductory handbook, including the renowned Spanish humanist Juan Luis Vives (1492/3–1540).²⁹ It is interesting to note here that Amerotius’s didactic abilities were also praised in Greek and by a Greek from Rhodes, Jakovos Diassorinos, who was in Brussels around 1555.³⁰ Diassorinos composed a dedicatory poem in honour of Amerotius, which remains prefixed to a manuscript copied by the Greek and containing the dialogue *Theophrastus*, authored by Aeneas of Gaza.³¹ In his poem, Diassorinos praises Amerotius as a “most pious man, most befitting of sacred matters” and as a “most wise and sensible teacher”.³²

²⁷ See Amerotius (1520: a.i^v).

²⁸ Anonymus (1550: c.iii^v).

²⁹ See Vives (1531: 108^r), Nève (1856: 209), De Vocht (1951–5: IV, 255), and Swiggers & Van Rooy (2015: 11–2). Botley (2010: 48) is less enthusiastic about Amerotius’s grammar.

³⁰ De Meyier (1948: 291); Hoven (1985: 3–4 n. 20).

³¹ The poem was previously edited by Omont (1885: 14–15) and *BH XV–XVII*, 419. See Appendix A for a new edition of the text together with an English translation. Cf. also Van Rooy (2017b).

³² Around the same time, Diassorinos also dedicated a manuscript with scholia on the orations by Gregory of Nazianzus to Amerotius’s pupil and patron, Antoine Perrenot, in a similar manner (De Meyier 1948).

A second reason for Amerotius's long-term effect lies in two excerpts from Amerotius's grammar which enjoyed a rich *Nachleben* from 1530 onwards. His discussion of the Greek numerical system came to be frequently published as an attachment to Greek dictionaries (*De Graecorum notis arithmetice compendium*), while his booklet on the Greek dialects (*De dialectis diversis declinationum Graecanicarum tam in verbis quam nominibus*) was printed either separately, or as an attachment to lexica.³³ Amerotius's *De dialectis* was particularly well-received and was sometimes also printed together with grammatical treatises on other aspects of Greek grammar.³⁴ Moreover, the front pages of two Parisian editions of Clenardus's grammar (1534, 1536) advertised a separately sold edition of this booklet.³⁵ Yet it should be added that, in later centuries, Amerotius's authorship of the treatise on the dialects came to be forgotten. Not only was there confusion about his name,³⁶ the treatise was also wrongly attributed to Johannes Varennius, doubtlessly because it was often printed together with different treatises (on Greek prosody and syntax) by this Mechelen humanist.³⁷

A third and final reason for the impact of Amerotius's grammar may be that it influenced Clenardus's grammar, which became one of the most widely used Greek grammars of the early modern era. Although this was already argued by Chauvin and Roersch and—in their tracks—De Vocht, this claim has not yet been thoroughly investigated.³⁸ In any case, it will remain difficult to separate what Clenardus owes directly to Amerotius from what he has taken from elsewhere. I am planning to conduct a careful analysis in the future. A first superficial comparison, however, reveals that Clenardus sometimes uses wordings very similar to phrases in Amerotius's grammar. Compare,

³³ The history of the treatise on Greek numbers is in need of a closer investigation, but the work on the dialects has already received extensive attention from Hoven (1985: 5–19) and Hummel (1999).

³⁴ See, e.g., Longolius (1533: [1]^v): “Deinde dialectorum tractatum addere supersedimus, quod longe dilucidior et faciliorem earum traditionem apud Adrianum Amerotium, in hac lingua versatissimum editam cognoscamus.” See also Hoven (1985: 6 n. 29); Chytraeus (1593: 101^v–2^r).

³⁵ Hoven (1985: 6).

³⁶ See Simonis (1752: 216), who mentions “Andr. Amerotius” among the “more recent” scholars discussing the Greek dialects.

³⁷ Twenty such editions appeared between 1542 and 1616 (Hoven 1985: 6). See also Hauptmann & Schmid (1737: 15), where Varennius is mentioned as one of those “qui διαλεκτολογίαν in genere sunt complexi.”

³⁸ Chauvin & Roersch (1900: 80); De Vocht (1951–5: II, 223).

for instance, the opening sentences of the section on the third declension of nouns (especially the underlined part):

Tertia declinatio est nominum masculinorum, femininorum, communium vel promiscuorum in ος et neutrorum in ον desinentium, ut ὁ λόγος hic sermo, ἡ ὁδὸς haec via, ὁ καὶ ἡ ἄνθρωπος hic et haec homo, ὁ ἀετὸς haec aquila, τὸ ξύλον hoc lignum, et quae in ος terminantur, omnino sequuntur declinationem articuli masculini generis, quae in ον, neutri. Et habent neutra tres casus similes, nominativum, accusativum et vocativum in omni numero et in omni declinatione.³⁹

Tertia declinatio complectitur masculina, feminina et communia in ος, ὁ λόγος, ἡ ὁδός, ὁ καὶ ἡ ἄνθρωπος, et neutra in ον, τὸ ξύλον. Vocativus in ε. Genitivus, dativus et accusativus, item dualia et pluralia, sequuntur articulum masculinum et neutrum. [...] Neutrorum tres casus similes, nominativus, accusativus et vocativus.⁴⁰

In this passage, Clenardus's discussion seems to be an abridged version of Amerotius's account. Elsewhere, his wording also appears to have been inspired by the work of his predecessor. For instance, when stating that there are "five principal Greek tongues" ("quinque Graecorum linguae praecipuae"),⁴¹ Clenardus seems to be relying on Amerotius's statement that there are "almost as many tongues of the Greeks as there are tribes, among which nevertheless principally five are employed" ("Graecorum linguae tot paene sunt, quot nationes, ex his tamen praecipue quinque celebrantur").⁴² The use of the word *praecipuus* in this context has no earlier parallels. Yet apart from the similarities, there are considerable differences between the two grammars as well; as pointed out before, the matter awaits further investigation.

³⁹ Amerotius (1520: c.iv^v).

⁴⁰ Clenardus (1530: 6–7).

⁴¹ Clenardus (1530: 7 [*sic pro* 6]).

⁴² Amerotius (1520: Q.i^v).

Finally, when we take a look at what “kind of Greek” Amerotius describes in his *Compendium*, it becomes immediately clear that this is not primarily Attic, which is the form of Greek first studied in secondary schools and at universities nowadays. He calls Attic the most graceful dialect,⁴³ but his grammar only describes common forms, i.e. forms which are (allegedly) the same for all dialects. Forms particular to different dialects are offered *passim* in the grammar, with a more systematic discussion at the end of the work (i.e. his later *De dialectis* booklet).

Outlook: Amerotius and the Greek language

Amerotius taught and transmitted Greek to hundreds of students for decades, both orally and through his grammatical work, and was thus of paramount importance for the spread of Greek studies in the sixteenth-century Low Countries in general and in Louvain in particular. This holds all the more true, since he was one of the first to enjoy considerable success with his Greek lessons. His didactic activities and success clearly testify to the fact that Greek was a vastly important language for humanists and—more importantly—increasingly so north of the Alps and especially in the Low Countries, an episode in the history of Greek studies that is still underexplored. Greek held an estimated place in the multilingual patchwork of the early modern world and was therefore by no means isolated or self-sufficient, contrary to its place in Ancient and Byzantine Greek scholarship, which took no genuine interest in seriously studying other languages. This thought raises two questions which as yet lack an adequate and systematic answer. On the one hand, it seems desirable to ask ourselves which position Greek occupies in the diversified linguistic patchwork of early modern scholarship, especially since Hellenists like Amerotius often mastered not only several learned languages (Latin and Hebrew in Amerotius’s case) but also one or more vernacular tongues (French and Dutch in Amerotius’s case). Such a focus will enable us to better understand the nature of early modern Hellenism. On the other hand, it is important to ask ourselves how the Greek language was conceived by early modern scholars. In other words, what *was* Greek from the varying perspectives of early modern scholars? Did a Greek or Italian intellectual have the same idea about it as a German or French humanist? Did conceptions evolve over time and if so, how? Was there a

⁴³ See Van den Gheyn (1909: 62); Van Rooy (2017a: 335).

kind of (silent) consensus? Or did the notion of “Greek” vary according to one’s scholarly goals? We often intuitively assume that we have approximately the same conception of “the Greek language” as early modern scholars did, but this is far from the truth. Although there may be overlaps between current and early modern conceptualisations (the bulk of Ancient Greek linguistic material has remained constant), there seem to be great differences in what can be dubbed the “prototypicalization” of Greek. Nowadays, classical scholars often silently assume that Attic is the prototypical form of Greek, whereas linguists focus on different kinds of “Greek”: “Greek” as a specific branch of the Indo-European language family, “Greek” as “proto-Greek,” “Greek” as modern Greek, “Greek” as (varieties of) ancient Greek, etc. And yet, for early modern thinkers, the *lingua Graeca* prototypically coincides with a kind of Attico-Ionicized *koine*, i.e. a hybrid variety of Ancient Greek,⁴⁴ which they referred to as *lingua communis*. They regarded the dialects as a body of forms exhibiting (more or less regulated) deviations from the *koine*, as did Amerotius. What is more, throughout the early modern period, vernacular Greek is viewed as a “marginal” variety of Greek, which needs to be determined by means of additional adjectives (“barbarous,” “vulgar,” etc.), and its relationship to ancient varieties of the Greek language caused much trouble to scholars of the period. To sum up, a closer investigation into the early modern conceptualisations of “the Greek language”—in grammars such as Amerotius’s and elsewhere—is indispensable in order to gain a fuller understanding of the linguistic dimensions of early modern Hellenism.

⁴⁴ Ciccolella (2008: 123) states that “the language taught in these grammars [by Chrysoloras, Gaza, and Lascaris] is the usual mixture of fifth-century Attic Greek, archaic Ionic dialect, and Hellenistic-Byzantine κοινή, without any focus on the history or the evolution of the language.” See also the inclusion of the so-called Attic declension among the declensions of the “Greek language,” which points to this hybrid conception of “Greek.” Jacobus Ceperinus tried to remedy this (Botley 2010: 50).

Appendix

A. Jakovos Diassorinos's poem in honour of Amerotius

Below I provide a slightly updated edition and a first English translation of Jakovos Diassorinos's poem in honour of Amerotius, who was the dedicatee of Diassorinos's manuscript copy of Aeneas of Gaza's *Theophrastus* (ms. 11373). Previous editions are Omont (1885: 14–5) and *BH XV-XVI*: II, 419.

Greek text

- 1 Εἰς τὸν εὐσεβέστατον καὶ ἱεροπρεπέστατον ἄνδρα κύριον
Ἀδριανὸν Ἀμερότιον σοφώτατόν τε καθηγητὴν καὶ νουνεχέστατον.
- Ἀδριανέ, ξείνου ἀνδρὸς τόδε λάζεο δῶρον
Κερκαφίδου⁴⁵ Δαναοῦ, εἴγε μικρὸν τελέθει.
- 5 Τυτθὴ μὲν δέλτος, ζητήματα δ' ἔστιν ἐν αὐτῇ
πίστεος ἀκραιφνοῦς ἄξια σῇ πραπίδι.
Ζεὺς γὰρ αἰεὶ προσάγει παραπλήσιον ἐς τὸν ὁμοῖον
ὥς ἡ Μαιονίδου φθέγγετο Καλλιόπη.
Μύστην οὖν θεωρημοσύνης⁴⁶ τόνδ' ἱεροφάντορ
- 10 ξεινίσας⁴⁷ ξενικῶς δέχνυσο εὐμενέως.
Ἰάκωβος Διασσωρίνος Ἑλλήν Πόδιος.

English translation

To the most pious man, most befitting of sacred matters, master

Adrianus Amerotius, most wise and sensible teacher.

Adrianus, receive this gift from a foreign man,

⁴⁵ For the use of Κερκαφίδης (v. 4) as well as Μαιονίδης (v. 8)—both to be understood as male nouns of the first declension—, Diassorinos probably relied on the *Greek Anthology*. Cf. *Greek Anthology* 9.287.2 and 16.49.3 for the former noun and 7.674.2, 9.28.6, and 9.192.2 for the latter.

⁴⁶ The word θεωρημοσύνη is a late antique neologism (4th cent. AD), which is glossed in the Byzantine era as: “τὴν θείαν διδασκαλίαν, τὴν κατήχησιν”; see *Collectio verborum utilium, Versio antiqua* Θ.52 (Cunningham 2003); Photius, *Lexicon* Θ.104.

⁴⁷ Omont (1885: 15) and *BH XV-XVI*: II, 419 wrongly read “Ξεινίσας.”

a Cercaphidan⁴⁸ Danaid,⁴⁹ if really it is a small one.
Little indeed is the manuscript, but your mind will find
questions in it that are worthy of honest faith.
For Zeus always brings a near equal to the similar,
as Calliope, the [muse] of the Maeonid,⁵⁰ recounted.
So, priest, receive this initiate of divine teaching
hospitably and welcome him kindly.
Jakovos Diassorinos, Greek from Rhodes.

B. Hadrianus Amerotius to Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle (21 January 1548)

Below, I edit, translate, and annotate a recently (re)discovered letter from Amerotius to his patron and (former) pupil Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle.⁵¹ The letter, written in French, dates from 21 January 1548. The value of this document not only consists in the fact that it provides previously unknown information on Amerotius's life; it moreover contributes to pedagogical history in that it allows us a unique window on his didactic activities as well as on his ties with the Granvelle family. The letter gives us a glimpse of his teaching of Greek and his tutoring of law and—quite remarkably and unusually—the local vernacular “Flemish” (Dutch) to members of the Granvelle family (and other students) at his boarding-house in Louvain. The text is preserved in Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, ms. 7904, item 51, and can be consulted online at the *Biblioteca Digital Hispánica*.⁵² The letter is the original one sent by Amerotius to Granvelle and still bears marks of its seal. I have respected the original orthography of the letter as much as possible, adding, however, acute accents on the last syllables whenever confusion could occur, and introducing apostrophes

⁴⁸ I.e. Rhodian.

⁴⁹ I.e. Greek.

⁵⁰ I.e. Homer. Calliope is said to have been Homer's muse in composing the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Homer was called the “Maeonid,” because some believed him to originate from Lydia, of which Maeonia was part.

⁵¹ I thank Professor Pierre Swiggers for having brought the letter to my attention and for providing helpful advice in editing and translating it.

⁵² Up till now, the letter has not yet been edited in its entirety; Castan (1888: 23 n. 2) and Antony (1984: 52) quote some passages incorrectly.

according to modern usage. I have replaced <i> by <j> and <u> by <v> whenever these graphemes represent a phoneme with consonantal value. I have moreover introduced the *c cédille* in accordance with current practice. Abbreviations have been resolved silently.

French text

1 Mon seigneur, je tiens que Monseigneur et vous aurez eu bon contentement de la response
que j'ay faict la veille des Roix a voz dernieres lettres et que aurez esté mieulx informé de
tout ce qu'il peult concerner la bonne nourriture et institution et du succes de leurs estudes
et ensemble du fruict que peuent jusques oyres avoir faict mes escoliers, que n'avez entendu
5 par avant, et suyvant l'ordonnance que m'avez faict, j'ay commencé a monstrar au
protenotaire [*sic*]⁵³ les *Institutes* textuellement avec le plus substantial des glosses et, oultre
ce, a commencé de ouir la leçon du docteur institutaire sur le tiltre *De obligationibus*. De
quoy il est tresjoyeux [*sic*] et fort content et est bien deliberé de soy y bien employer, voire
en continuant tousjours les bonnes lettres latines, en oyant les deux leçons de Nannius et
10 les grecques en oyant ma leçon, ce qu'il a mieulx aymé que de ouyr la leçon grecque
publicque. Frederic est aussi fort ayse de ce changement. Et mesmement pour ce qu'ilz sont
delivrés des leçons de maistre Jehan. Et pour les entretenir en ce bon vouloir, je leurs [*sic*]
ay accordé trois heures pour estudier et repeter a par eulx⁵⁴ ce qu'ilz voudront, a charge
qu'ilz me rendront compte de leur debvoir. Auquel si je treuve faulte, je leur feray nouvelle
15 ordonnance. Pierre Bordey estudie assez bien, mais il a eu grant regret au commencement
de ce qu'il ne tenoit compaignie au protonotaire pour estudier aux *Institutes*. En somme,
le commencement de ce nouveau changement est bon et m'en contente bien.

Quant au flamen, j'ay ordonné que nous lisons, Maistre Jehan et moy et les enfans, tous
les jours apres disné et apres soupé, histoires en flamen et feray par ce moyen qu'ilz sçauront
20 la langue. Il n'y a point d'espoir de leur faire sçavoir en parlant avec les domesticques, car ilz
n'en veullent riens faire encore qu'ilz l'entendent bien. Et le protonotaire dict, en presence
de Viron dernièrement le jour de l'an, qu'il n'aymoit point le pays et que s'il en estoit dehors,
il n'y reviendrait jamais plus, en donnant par cela a entendre que, puis qu'il ne vouloit point

⁵³ This is a *lapsus calami* for "protonotaire" (cf. l. 16 and l. 21).

⁵⁴ The prepositional combination "a par" in the phrase "repeter a par eulx" ("recapitulating by themselves") is unusual.

⁵⁶ The phrase “lettres [...] tant composees que tournees de la derniere forge,” which I have translated as “letters [...] both most recently composed and translated,” does not seem to have any clear parallels in sixteenth-century French. I interpret “de la derniere forge” as “from the last creation,” i.e. “most recent(ly).” The meaning of the verb *tourner* is also unclear in this context; it is likely to refer to the exercise of translating letters.

[*post-scriptum*]

Au lieu du service de Thomas a cause de sa recheute en maladie, il me fault entretenir une femme pour le garder et faire servir en son lieu François Cornet, vostre paige. Toutesfois, il commance a donner quelque esperance de convalescence.

[*address written on the back*]

50 A mon Seigneur, Monseigneur d'Arras.

[*address, written vertically*]

Maistre

[*archival note, written vertically, in a different hand (that of Antoine's secretary?)*]

Adrien ^{xxi} de janvier 1548

English translation

My lord, I assume that Milord⁵⁷ and you will have taken great satisfaction out of the answer I gave on the eve of Epiphany to your most recent letter(s)⁵⁸ and that you will have been better informed about everything that may concern good education and instruction, and about the success of their studies along with the progress my students have been able to achieve thus far, about which you have not heard before. And according to the command you gave me, I have started to show to the protonotary⁵⁹ the *Institutes*, the text of it along with the most substantial glosses, and, apart from that, he has started to attend the course of the teacher of the *Institutes*⁶⁰ on the title *On Obligations*.⁶¹ He is very happy and well pleased about this and he is very determined to devote himself to this,

⁵⁷ This refers to Antoine's father, Nicolas.

⁵⁸ The French word *lettres* can refer to several different letters or to one single letter (by analogy to Latin *litterae*, "letter"). The end of the letter suggests the former interpretation.

⁵⁹ The protonotary is most likely to be identified with Charles Perrenot, Antoine's brother, who had this title since 3 December 1543 (Castan 1888: 23 n. 2; Antony 1984: 52). Antoine also held this office; see, e.g., a Latin letter from Amerotius to Antoine dated 20 September 1537 (BPR Ms. II/2298), in which Antoine is addressed as "candidiss[ime] D[omine] proto[notari]" (6^r) and "D[omine] proto[notari]" (fol. 6^v).

⁶⁰ The title *docteur institutaire* refers to the professor who explained the *Institutes* of Justinian.

⁶¹ This title is part of the *Institutes*—see the first and fifth *tituli* of the fourth book.

even while constantly continuing his studies of the good Latin letters by attending the two courses of Nannius⁶² and the Greek letters by attending my course, which he liked more than attending the public Greek course.⁶³ Frédéric is also very happy about this change. And likewise because they are released from the courses of master Jean.⁶⁴ And in order to maintain their benevolence, I have accorded them three hours for studying and recapitulating by themselves whatever they want, provided that they will give an account of their homework. But if I find fault with it, I will give them a new assignment. Pierre Bordey is studying well enough, but he had great regrets at the beginning about the fact that he did not keep the protonotary company to study the *Institutes*. To sum up, the beginning of this new change is good and I am well pleased about it.

As to Flemish, I have prescribed that we read, master Jean, I and the children, every day after dinner and after supper, histories in Flemish, and I will arrange in this manner that they will know the language. There is absolutely no hope at all to make them learn it by talking with the domestic servants, as they do not want to make use of it, even though they understand it well. And recently, on New Year's Day, the protonotary said, in the presence of Viron,⁶⁵ that he did not at all like the country and that, if he would be out of it, he would never again return. Thus, he indicated that since he did not at all want to stay in the land, he had but little use for the language. Never had I heard such things from him. And the abovementioned lord Viron and I, we reminded him of his duties and we brought him back to his best senses. Milord and you can understand by this that it is rather difficult for a hunter to catch the hare when the dog does not want to run. And to remedy it, I will

⁶² Amerotius refers to his colleague Petrus Nannius, then professor of Latin at the *Collegium Trilingue* (a position he occupied since 1539). On Nannius, see Polet (1936); De Vocht (1951–5: IV, 268–98).

⁶³ Amerotius's reference to "his course" of Greek is somewhat enigmatic. He contrasts his Greek lessons with the public Greek course. Consequently, he might well refer here to Greek courses he taught both publicly at the *Trilingue* and in private. However, he does not explicitly state that he is the teacher of the public course, nor is it known whether or not he was still teaching Greek privately in January 1548. It therefore seems most likely that the course which Amerotius calls "ma leçon" refers to his own teachings at the *Trilingue*, all the more since he brackets it together with Nannius's Latin courses. However, if we interpret the text in this sense, it remains unclear what is meant by "the public Greek lesson." These might then refer to courses of Greek taught at the arts faculty of the University of Louvain. As a matter of fact, from 1528 onwards, there were official courses of Greek at the College of the Lily (De Vocht 1951–5: I, 68).

⁶⁴ This is perhaps Jean Sachet (1501–1563), who also taught Antoine. See Antony (1984: 45, 47, 50, 52).

⁶⁵ Odet Viron was Antoine's representative in the Low Countries (Van Durme 1953: 249, 296, 332).

catch the hare myself and I will tie him up by his foot and I will make him understand, by means of the histories we read and translate every day, what is said in Flemish, and only a small quarter of an hour every time, so that we do not at all interrupt the other studies too much.

The son of the vice-chancellor of Bohemia,⁶⁶ who came on the eve of Epiphany, is still in our house along with a servant, and because I did not receive any letter from anybody, and he claimed to have come directly from you to our residence, I have lodged him with his aforementioned servant in the guest room until I have more news. The day before yesterday, Dom Maximilien Morillon told me that he acted on your behalf placing him in another house in order that he be educated and instructed as you desire. And he has to carry out this task shortly, as soon as he returns from Brussels. And although his young son, mentioned above, is here to be provided for at his father's expenses, I presuppose you assume that I need not charge anything for lodging expenses of the three or four weeks during which he might have stayed at our house, and this I will not do. Milord, I request you to communicate the above to Milord, to whom I am not writing back for the time being, lest I repeat myself. And attached to this are the letters of my students, both most recently composed and translated.

Having said this, I humbly greet your good grace, praying the Creator to give you, Milord, a good and long life. From Louvain, this 21 January 1548.

[Dated] in Roman fashion. Your humble servant,

Adrien Amerot.

[*post-scriptum*]

Instead of the service of Thomas,⁶⁷ because of his relapse into illness, I have to avail myself of a woman to look after him and to make François Cornet, your page, serve in his stead. In any case, he is starting to give some hope for recovery.

[*address written on the back*]

To my lord, Milord of Arras.

⁶⁶ This is Ferdinand von Loxau (Logschau/Loxan/Lokschan), the son of Georg von Loxau (Loxanus; † 1554), the vice-chancellor of Bohemia (see Bůžek 2009: 97 n. 265). The latter is known to have corresponded with Antoine in 1549.

⁶⁷ This refers to Thomas Perrenot, Antoine's brother.

[*vertical*]

Master

[*vertical, in a different hand (that of Antoine's secretary?)*]

Adrien 21st of January 1548

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