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► **To cite this version:**

Line Cottegnies, Rémy Cordonnier. New Discoveries about the Saint-Omer Folio: The Signification of the PS Stamp. *Etudes Epistémè: revue de littérature et de civilisation (XVIe - XVIIIe siècles)*, 2016, 29 (29), <https://episteme.revues.org/1089>. <halshs-01355241>

HAL Id: halshs-01355241

<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-01355241v1>

Submitted on 21 Dec 2022

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Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/episteme/1089>

DOI: 10.4000/episteme.1089

ISSN: 1634-0450

Publisher

Association Études Épistémè

Printed version

Date of publication: 21 June 2016

Brought to you by Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne



Electronic reference

Line Cottegnies and Rémy Cordonnier, "New Discoveries about the Saint-Omer Folio: The Signification of the PS Stamp", *Études Épistémè* [Online], 29 | 2016, Online since 25 June 2016, connection on 08 August 2022. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/episteme/1089> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/episteme.1089>

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New Discoveries about the Saint-Omer Folio: The Signification of the PS Stamp

Nouvelles découvertes sur le Folio de Shakespeare de Saint-Omer : les marques PS élucidées

Line Cottegnies and Rémy Cordonnier

- 1 Since the “discovery” of the Shakespeare First Folio in the Saint-Omer Municipal Library in the autumn of 2014, the academic community has been speculating about Shakespeare’s possible connections with the Jesuit College of St Omers, which was originally created in 1593 by Robert Persons. The history of the Saint-Omer *Bibliothèque d’Agglomération* partially overlaps with that of the English Jesuit College: founded in the buildings of the Walloon Jesuit College in the early nineteenth century, the library was created from the revolutionary confiscations of 1793, which resulted in the sequestration of the libraries of all the religious institutions in the area. The English Jesuits, however, had discreetly left Saint-Omer in 1762 to relocate to Bruges (and subsequently Liège), leaving most of their books behind, and their library and college were then taken over by English secular clergy whose property was in turn expropriated in 1792, when the college was turned into a military hospital.¹ The 1793 general sequestration put an end to the English clergy’s hopes for restitution. However, much is still unclear about what happened to the core of the English Jesuit library (which they were unable to take with them in their flight to Bruges in 1762) between 1762 and 1823, which is the date when the first catalogue of the library, written by its first librarian, Jean-Charles-Joseph Aubin, was completed.² Only a small part of the initial library has made its way into the Saint-Omer rare books collections.
- 2 In an article published in May 2015 in *Études Épistémè*, Line Cottegnies and Gisèle Venet studied the annotations in the Folio and described the curious marking of the book, the letters PS hand-pressed repeatedly throughout at regular intervals (on nine occasions, in fact, almost every hundred pages),³ and speculated about the presence of the marking.

The most likely hypotheses which the article offered to account for the marking were that the letters stood either for “*Permissu Superiorum*” (“with the permission of the Superiors”, a form of imprimatur or approbation often used by the Jesuits in the period, and, more to the point, for the books printed on the St Omers presses) or “*Praefectus/i/o Studiorum*” – nominative, genitive or dative (“Prefect of Studies,” “Belonging to the Prefect of Studies,” or “For the Prefect of Studies”). Given that the College Prefect of Studies was in charge of the students’ curriculum and of what both students and Jesuits read, the marking could be construed either as a mark of ownership, or as a sign of approbation or censorship.

- 3 Since then, other similarly-marked books, six in total to date, have emerged in the Saint-Omer rare books collection, however, and this allows us to offer in this article some conclusive evidence about what the letters PS mean, although many questions still remain unanswered. This short article mainly aims at describing the books marked with the letters PS that have been identified. We suggest that the marking indicates the inclusion of the PS-marked books into a separate section of the library, the special collection of a Prefect of Studies, which held books that were kept separate from the main communal library. This raises in turn some interesting questions about the juxtaposition of the Folio with the other PS-marked books, and we offer some tentative suggestions to try and explain why it was thus withdrawn from circulation and placed in a reserve or special collection.
- 4 Among the seven books with the PS marks that have emerged the oldest one is dated 1534 and the latest one 1677. They do not constitute a homogeneous set: one set includes books of scholarship, mainly in Greek and Latin (three dating back to the first half of the sixteenth century), two (including the Folio) are in English:
 1. Heliodorus, *Heliodorum aithiopikes historias biblia deka* [*Heliodori Historiae aethiopicae libri decem, nunquam antea in lucem editi*], Basiliae ex officina Hervagiana, 1534. Quarto. BASO, inv. 2429.
 2. Cicero, *Opera Marci Tullii Ciceronis quotquot ab interitu vindicari summorum virorum industria*, Basiliae ex officina Hervagiana, 1540. Folio. BASO, inv. 2169.
 3. Thucydides, *Istorias syggraphe. Historiae liber primus [-secundus] [-tertius]*, Parisii, Apud Mich. Vascosanum, 1548. Quarto. BASO, inv. 3595.
 4. William Shakespeare, *Comedies, Histories and Tragedies*, London, Printed by Isaac Jaggard and Edward Blount, 1623. Folio. BASO, inv. 2227.
 5. Johannes Buxtorf, *Lexicon hebraicum et chaldaicum*, Basiliae, Sumptibus Johannis König, 1663. Octavo. BASO, inv. 2477.
 6. [Edward Stillingfleet], *The Jesuits Loyalty, Manifested in Three several Treatises... Also Three other Treatises concerning the Reasons of the Penal Laws*, London, Richard Royston, 1677. Quarto. BASO, inv. 1206.
 7. Livy, *Titi Livii patavini latinae historiae principis Decas Prima*, 4 vol., Lugduni, Apud Haeredes Simonis Vincentii, 1537. Octavo. BASO, inv. 3970.
- 5 The unusual PS marks, similar in the seven marked books, are very distinctive and in the same font. They are letters applied separately in ink at the bottom of the page, using the same two metal hand stamps in all the books (perhaps tools made with printing blocks or types) – in some instances the letters are not quite straight. The PS’s are either both on the same page (centred or not), usually when there was room for them (fig. 1 and 2), or applied separately on two consecutive pages, in a bottom corner (fig 3).

Fig. 1. William Shakespeare, *Comedies, Histories and Tragedies*



London, 1623, p. 100, f. K4^v, 2 Henry IV. BASO, inv. 2227

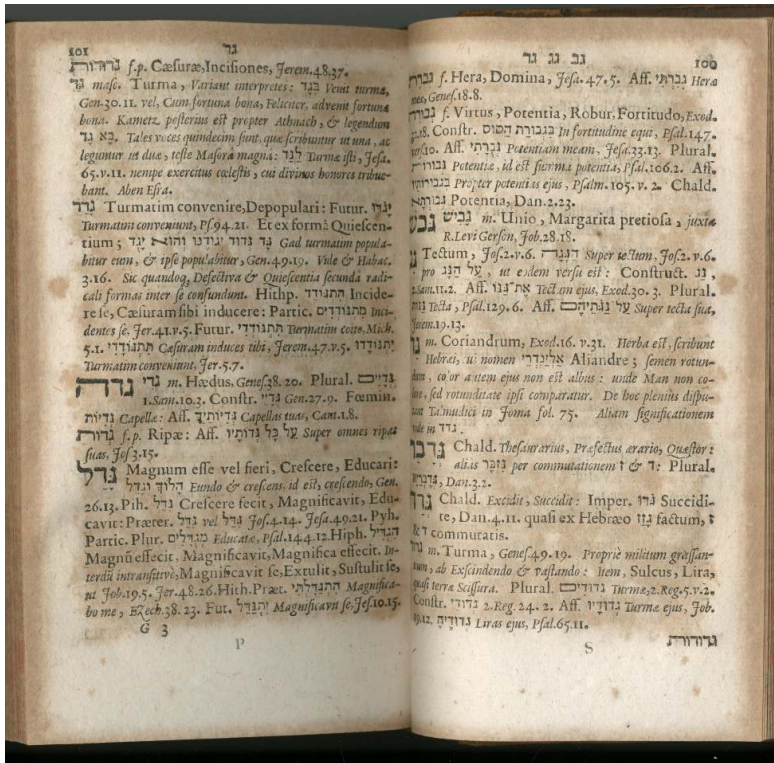
(All illustrations reproduced by kind permission of the *Bibliothèque d'Agglomération de Saint-Omer*).

Fig. 2. Cicero, *Opera Marci Tullii Ciceronis quotquot ab interitu vindicari summorum virorum industria*



Basilae, 1540, p. 1. BASO, inv. 2169

Fig. 3. John Buxtorf, *Lexicon hebraicum et chaldaicum*

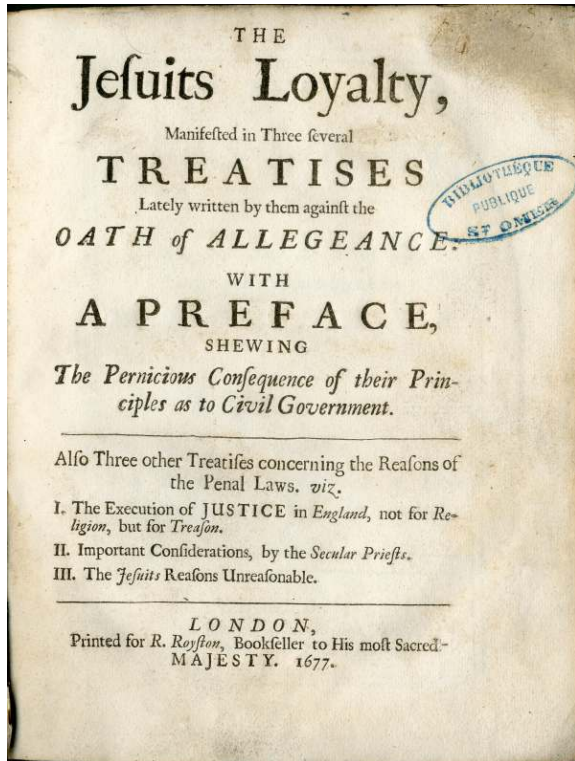


Basilae, 1663, p. 100-101. BASO, inv. 2477

- 6 The books are all marked repeatedly (9 occurrences in the Folio, 14 in *The Jesuits Loyalty*, for instance), at more or less regular intervals. In the case of the Cicero, Thucydides, Heliodorus, Livy, as well as in the *Lexicon*, which are numbered continuously, the books are marked regularly every hundred pages, and (usually) at the beginnings and ends of the books. In the case of the Shakespeare Folio, the erratic page numbering did not make this easy, but the rule holds, although the marks are sometimes placed on the very last page of a play when its page number was close enough to a multiple of a hundred. The book is also marked on its last page extant, which proves that when it was marked it was already in its imperfect state. Cottegnies and Venet also showed that, in all likelihood, the Folio was part of a parcel of books (none of them marked with PS's) which was donated by a Thomas Nevill in 1736 (perhaps as a gift after the devastating fire of 1725 which destroyed a good part of the library), when they were endorsed by the College. Because the Folio bears the same signature “Nevill” (perhaps the same Thomas Nevill, but not necessarily) as those books, on its first extant page,⁴ it is possible to suggest that the Folio was marked with the PS letters sometime after 1736, after it was officially entered into the Library, and before 1792, although no eighteenth-century marked book has yet been found.⁵ Sadly none of the marked books retains an identifiable provenance mark – as most of the provenance and ownership marks of the English books in the Library appear to have been mutilated over time –,⁶ and we have therefore no guarantee that the books were marked by a Jesuit, and not by a member of the secular clergy that took over from the Jesuits.

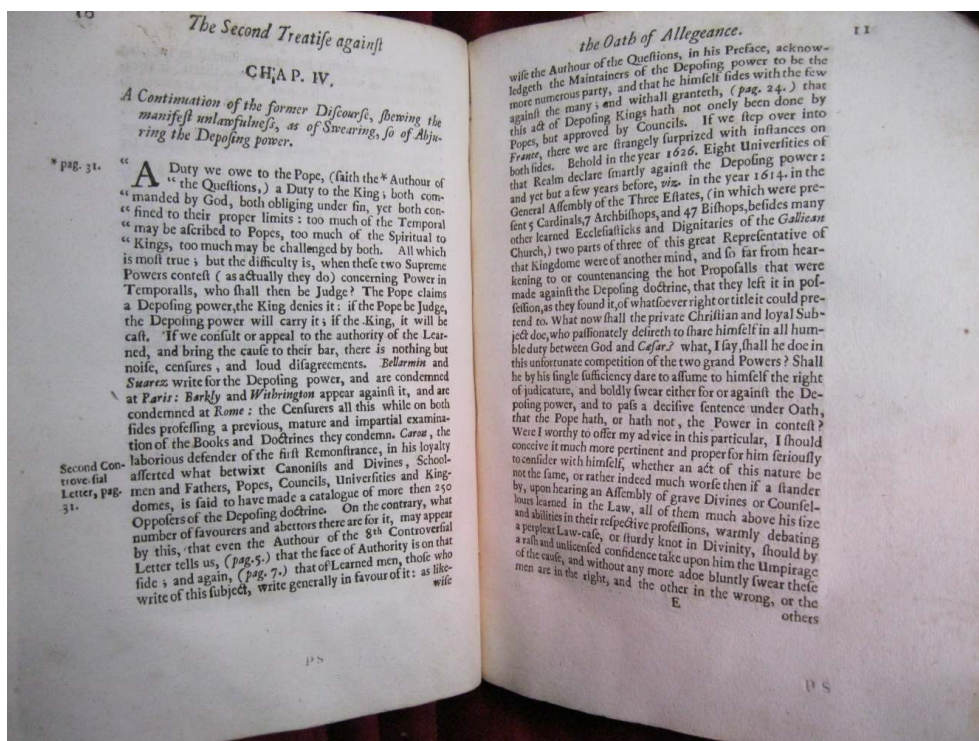
- 7 The case of *The Jesuits Loyalty*, which is also the latest of the set of marked books (1677), seems slightly different, however, perhaps because of the composite nature of the book, which consists in a collection of short pamphlets rather than a coherent treatise (fig. 4).⁷

Fig. 4. [Edward Stillingfleet], *The Jesuits Loyalty*

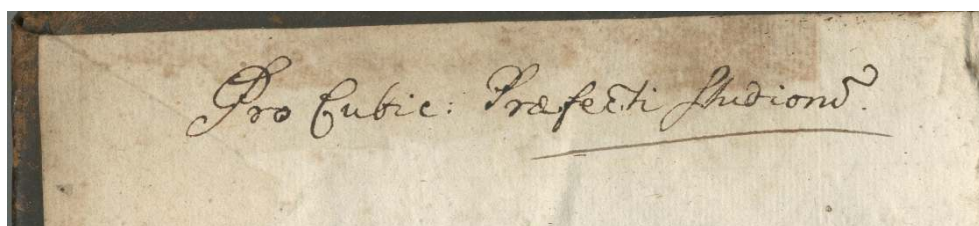


London, 1677, Title-page. BASO, inv. 1206

- 8 It shows a variant in the marking and the letters never appear in isolation (P on one page, S on the facing page). As a result PS's are sometimes repeated on two consecutive pages (see fig. 5 below), so we cannot be absolutely sure that they were stamped by the same person as the one who marked the other books, although the PS's are absolutely similar in font and size to the others. Ten marks appear in the first collection (182 pages) and four in the second (about 140 pages). The same dual strategy seems to have been followed as in the other marked books, partly logical, partly purely numerical. PS letters tend to mark the ends, as well as, in some cases, the beginnings of individual pieces: five pamphlets out or six are marked on the last page; three out of six on the first page. In some cases, PS's also fall on pages which are multiples of 10 (six out of fourteen cases), although this is not systematic – just as was the case with multiples of 100 in the other books.

Fig. 5. [Edward Stillingfleet], *The Jesuits Loyalty* (London, 1677), p. 10-11. BASO, inv. 1206

- 9 Two of the six pamphlets which make up the volume seem to have come under close scrutiny, totalling eight out of the fourteen marks, i.e. the second and third treatises against the Oath of Allegiance.⁸
- 10 What do the letters stand for? The presence of a manuscript annotation on the front paste-down of the Heliodorus volume can perhaps help settle the case; it specifies: “Pro Cubic[ulo]. Praefecti Studio[rum]” (fig. 6).

Fig. 6. Heliodorus, *Heliodorum aethiopicis historiae biblia deka* [Heliodori historiae aethiopiae libri decem, nunquam antea in lucem editi]

Basiliae, 1534, front paste-down (detail). BASO, inv. 2429

- 11 The “cubicle” (Latin *cubiculum*) could be a bedchamber, but in the Jesuit context it is a study room or a cabinet (rather than a small partitioned space as a carrel in a library). It can be assumed, therefore, that the letters PS indicate that the books belonged to the special library of the Prefect of Studies. It is not clear, however, whether we are dealing here with a particular Prefect of Studies, or whether this way of marking the Prefect’s books was a general usage unique to St Omers and used over time – this was, after all, a college which had had its own printing presses and therefore all sorts of typographical tools at hand.⁹ It was even suggested to us that the ink used for the marking might be

printing ink, although this is conjectural.¹⁰ Although little is known about the organization of the library at the College, it seems clear from annotations still extant in books held in Saint-Omer that there were in fact several libraries within the library: the main library (or common library, restricted to the Jesuits), the students' library, a separate library for the infirmary, perhaps a sodality library, and the various libraries of the Jesuits and Masters, either personal or in their capacities as Masters.¹¹ In his study of the “personal” library of the Jesuit Jean-François Foucquet in Peking in the early eighteenth century, Noël Golvers argues that Jesuits Colleges “filed or stored [books] not only in the ‘common library’ (*bibliotheca domestica*), but also in other rooms, either those of individual Jesuits, or rooms with a specific function, or a professional destination.”¹² In the Saint-Omer library today, the inscription “*Bibliothecae majori*” (“for the large / main library”) in several books indicates that they belonged to the main library (fig. 7).¹³

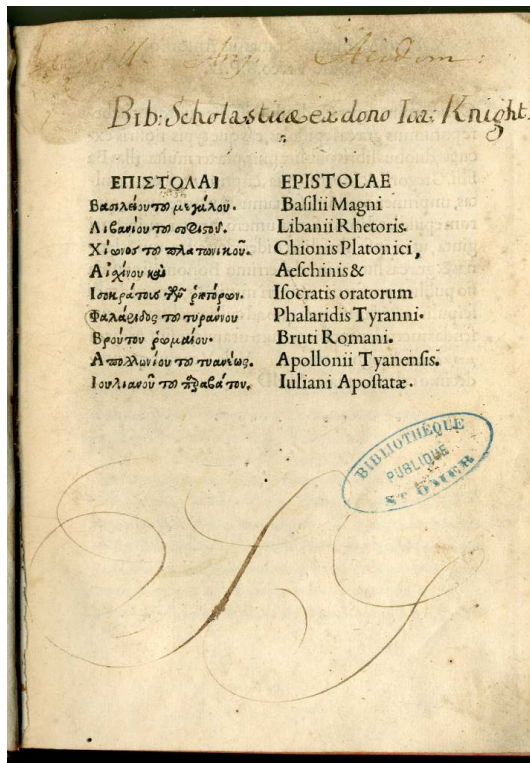
Fig. 7. *Basilii Magni Caesareæ cappadociæ archiepiscopi opera*



Parisiis, 1638, vol. 2, Title-page (detail). BASO Inv. 117

- 12 It is clear that the main library comprised different sections. BASO Incunabulum n°85 has a manuscript annotation which indicates that it belonged to the “*Bib: Scholasticæ*,” for instance – “*ex dono Ioa. Knight*” confirms the English provenance (fig. 8).

Fig. 8. BASO, Inculabulum n°85



- 13 Similarly, the Saint-Omer Library holds a copy of Randall Cotgrave's *Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues*, which still possesses two manuscript marks of provenance on the title-page, the one below the other: "Bib. Majori Coll. Angl. Soc. Jesu Audomari" and "Pro cubiculo Mgri [Magisteri] Poeseos."¹⁴ The inscription indicates that the book was part of the Jesuit library, but was attached to the *cubiculum*, or study, of the Master of Poetry in this case.
- 14 Little can be inferred, however, about the uses of this Prefect's library. It can perhaps be presumed that this was a special collection of reference books, which a Prefect of Studies kept for his own professional use. But did it also include books which were kept from circulation for various reasons? And would the books be read by readers others than the Prefect of Studies? The general rule of Jesuit colleges specified that the books set aside in the various studies (or *cubicula*) were not the property of their readers; as Golvers writes:
- these books were supposed to be returned, at the appropriate time, to the library of the local Jesuit community, and to be included with the books of that collection, either at the end of the special task, the death of the father in question, or when that father moved to another Jesuit house.¹⁵
- 15 It is likely, therefore, that these books remained in the *cubiculum* of the Prefect of Studies after the departure of the man who began marking them with the PS letters, to be used by his successors. But it is not clear what exactly such conspicuous marks were for. Were they simply marks of ownership, meant to remind potential readers of which library (or section of the library) they belonged to? Or marks made by a book-proud Prefect of Studies, with collector's tastes? Or, more intriguing, a form of branding to mark the books as approved by the Prefect of Studies, or, in some cases, as suspicious? In his system written for the library of the Collège de Clermont in Paris, the Jesuit Jean Garnier, Professor of theology, assigned a separate place to the *libri prohibiti*.¹⁶ Yet the Saint-Omer

library still includes a few books inscribed as *libri prohibiti* but not marked with the letters PS.

- 16 Five of the punched books constitute a homogeneous set of humanistic reference books: the four sixteenth-century Greek and Latin books would obviously have been considered to be precious, and this might also be the case of the Chaldean and Hebrew lexicon, a classic, an earlier copy of which also featured in the 1679 catalogue of the Jesuit library of Holbeck, Nottinghamshire.¹⁷ Two are of bibliographic interest. The Livy (in four volumes) has an unusual Renaissance binding of crisp gold-tooled vellum decorated with a semis of adorned CC monograms in a lozenge trelliswork of knotted rope (fig. 9), which could be Catherine da Medici's.¹⁸

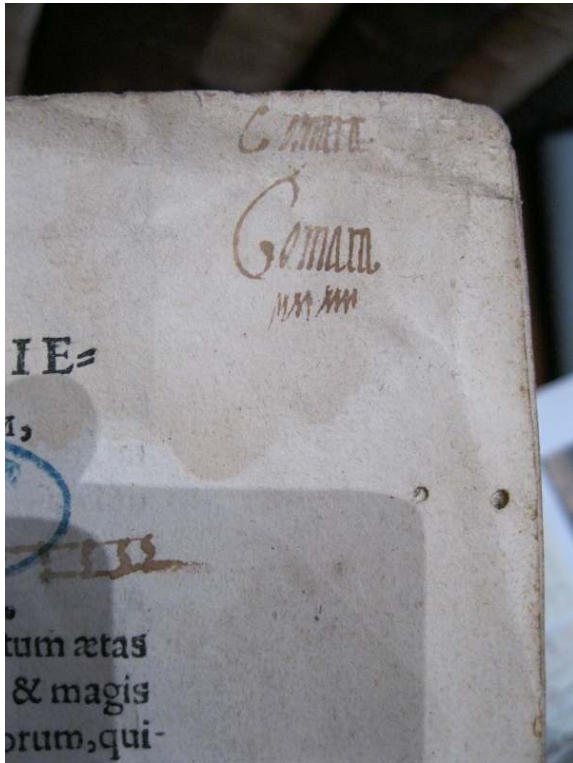
Fig. 9. Livy, *Titi Livii patavini latinae historiae principis Decas Prima*



4 vol., Lugduni, 1537, cover. BASO, inv. 3970

- 17 The Latin Cicero is also interesting. It is an edition of the works of Cicero by the great Protestant German humanist Joachim Camerarius,¹⁹ heavily annotated in ink by (at least) two early humanistic hands. The volume, which is not in its original binding, is inscribed on what is now its first page extant (since it misses its title-page and preliminary pages) by a previous owner, one Gomara. Whether this is the same person as the Sevillian humanist Francisco Lopez de Gomara (1510-c. 1566) would require more work to be established with any degree of certainty (fig. 10).

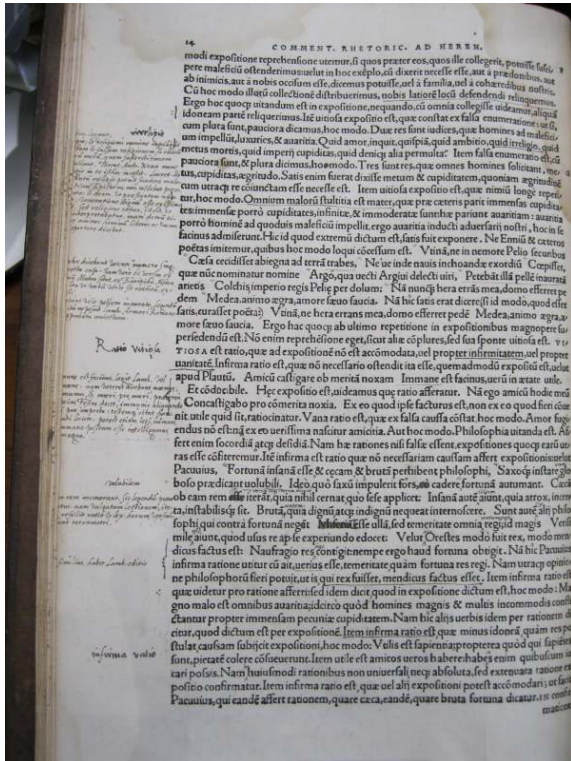
Fig. 10. Cicero, Opera Marci Tullii Ciceronis quotquot ab interitu vindicari summorum virorum industria



Basilae, 1540, sig. AaA 2 (detail). BASO, inv. 2169

- 18 The annotations are of two kinds. The first kinds of annotations (hand A), which bear testimony to a thorough philological and textual work, indicate that this might be the working copy of a humanist, perhaps used for teaching: hand A, writing in Latin and in a very regular, tiny script, compares Camerarius's text with other editions. Lambinus is the name that is mentioned most frequently, but the annotator also mentions Nonius Marcellus, Varro and Asconius, as well as Jean Passerat (Passeratus), Paulus Manutius, and Strebée (Strebaeus). He registers variants in the margins, often correcting Camerarius's text, and includes extensive summaries, and occasional comments, above or below the text – some of which were cropped when the book was bound again (fig. 11).

Fig. 11. Cicero, Opera Marci Tullii Ciceronis quotquot ab interitu vindicari summorum virorum industria



Basilae, 1540, p. 14. BASO, inv. 2169

- 19 Annotations in a second hand (hand B), in a larger script, consist in indexes, again in Latin, which point to key notions or words in the text; they are consonant with conventional humanistic reading practices.
- 20 The Livy and the Cicero would no doubt have been considered to be precious books in the eighteenth century, when the reserve of this Prefect of Studies was presumably constituted. The other marked books contain almost no annotations. The edition of Heliodorus has a few annotations in Greek (all of a lexicographical nature) scattered in the first pages, like the Livy. There are no annotations in the Thucydides or in the *Lexicon*. None of these five books are strictly speaking contentious or liable to censorship, although Heliodorus, in spite of its status as a Greek classic, might have been considered just a little too frivolous in the context of a boys' college.
- 21 The juxtaposition with these books of scholarship of the last two books of the group, the Shakespeare Folio and Stillingfleet's *The Jesuits Loyalty*, is baffling. Should they be considered as reference books in their own right?²⁰ Why were they set aside? If seen in juxtaposition with the humanistic reference books, Shakespeare's works might be considered as a valuable source for the Jesuits whose interest in English history and drama for pedagogical purposes is well-known;²¹ but the Folio sits uneasily with *The Jesuits Loyalty*, a virulent piece of anti-Catholic, and more particularly anti-Jesuit, propaganda. To explore this point further would take us beyond the scope of this essay,²² but in the case of *The Jesuits Loyalty*, a piece of anti-Jesuit polemic, the letters PS seem to reflect interventions of an attentive reader. If this is correct, then the PS's might well also be an indication that the book had come under close scrutiny – and was considered

perhaps as not to be put into all hands.²³ The potential reader, if the book was at all allowed to leave the “special collection” of the Prefect of Studies, would be forewarned, by the branding, about the book’s controversial or sensitive nature. To conclude, it is clear that for us to understand the status Shakespeare’s works could have in the eyes of their College readers, more work needs to be done on the organization of Jesuit libraries in general and of the library, or libraries, at St Omers in particular – especially in light of the particular composite nature of a library which suffered two fires, in 1684 and 1725, and was dismantled on two occasions (1762 and 1792), and thus lost its integrity. It is also likely that in the next few years more books of the same series will emerge, either in the libraries of Stonyhurst, or elsewhere, which will help us better understand the rationale for the inclusion of the Shakespeare Folio in this set.

NOTES

1. For a history of the Jesuit College from the foundation to the relocation to Stonyhurst, see Maurice Whitehead, *English Jesuit Education. Expulsion, Suppression, Survival and Restoration, 1762-1803*, London, Farnham, 2013.
2. “Catalogue raisonné de la plus grande partie de ces livres précieux qui ont paru successivement dans la république des lettres, depuis l’invention de l’imprimerie jusqu’à nos jours, suivi d’un catalogue de plus de neuf cens manuscrits. le tout disposé par ordre de matières et de facultés, suivant le système bibliographique généralement adopté ; avec une table générale des auteurs, une notice des livres imprimés dans le 15^e siècle, et une autre notice des ouvrages qui ont été imprimés sans indication de ville ou sans date d’année et sans le nom de l’imprimeur. par Jean Charles Joseph Aubin, ancien bénédictin de la congrégation de St maur et Bibliothécaire de la Ville de St omer. A paris chez ----- MDIII XXIII.” The catalogue was never printed.
3. Line Cottegnies and Gisèle Venet, “More Mysteries about the Saint-Omer Folio: Nevill and other marks of Ownership”, *Études Épistémè*, 27, Spring 2015. URL: <http://episteme.revues.org/472> (consulted 2 February 2016). For a study of the manuscript annotations in the book, see Jean-Christophe Mayer, “The Saint-Omer First Folio: Perspectives on a New Shakespearean Discovery”, *Cahiers Élisabéthains*, 87, Spring 2015, p. 7-20.
4. For more about Nevill, see Cottegnies and Venet, art. cit., and Line Cottegnies, “The Saint-Omer Shakespeare Folio in its Library”, to be published in *Cahiers Élisabéthains* (Spring 2017). For the history of the two fires that partially destroyed the college and its library in 1684 and 1725, see Hubert Chadwick, S. J., *From St Omers to Stonyhurst. A History of Two Centuries*, London, Burns & Oates, 1962, Chapters 9 and 10.
5. Is it possible that a particular Prefect of Studies possessed and marked the set of the seven books described above before 1736 (given that the last marked book is 1677), perhaps even in a different environment? It makes the coincidence of the presence of the marked Folio in the parcel of books (which contains no other PS-marked book) donated to the Jesuit College by Thomas Nevill in 1736 rather improbable. Even though we cannot be sure, it is more logical to suppose that the books were marked sometime between 1736 and 1792. The Livy has a possessor’s name crossed out on its title-page, with a date: 1789.

6. It seems likely that the successors of the Jesuits tried to erase marks of their former presence. On the rivalry between the Jesuits and the secular English clergy, see Maurice Whitehead, *op. cit.*, chapter 4.
7. This is the second edition of *The Jesuits Loyalty* which was here issued with another collection of (three) previously-published tracts, *A Collection of several treatises concerning the reasons and occasions of the penal laws* (originally 1675), and a new title-page.
8. In *The Jesuits Loyalty*, marks can be found on p. 10, 11, 30, 31, 43 of the second treatise, and on p. 100, 101, 132 of the third treatise.
9. If it was a practice unique to St Omers, then it is odd that it was not similarly applied to other special collections within the College. The general Jesuit rule is that books were to be inscribed by hand by the librarians. As shown above, the marking of the Folio can be dated between 1736 and 1792. We should therefore also remember that there is no certainty that the Prefect of Studies who marked the books, if he was unique, was Jesuit, given that it is a function that still existed after the College was taken over by the secular clergy in 1762. Line Cottegnies would like to thank Maurice Whitehead for inspirational conversations about these issues.
10. Line Cottegnies would like to thank Goran Proot and his colleagues of the *Flanders Book Historical Society* for this intriguing suggestion.
11. For Ignatius's rules about libraries, see Fernandez Zapico, *Monumenta ignatiana ex autographis vel ex antiquioribus exemplis collecta*, 3rd series, Rome, Institutim Historicu, 1942, vol. 4, p. 58-61. See also Brendan Connolly, "The Roots of Jesuit Librarianship: 1540-1599", Ph.D. Thesis, University of Chicago, 1955, p. 61-96, and his "Jesuit Library Beginnings", *The Library Quarterly*, 30.4, 1960, p. 243-252. For Jesuits and libraries, see Mark L. Grover, "The Book and the Conquest: Jesuit Libraries in Colonial Brazil", *Libraries & Cultures*, 28.3, 1993, p. 266-283, p. 269. For a study of a Jesuit Library in its integrity, see Hendrik Dijkgraaf, *The Library of a Jesuit Community at Holbeck, Nottinghamshire (1679)*, Tempe, AZ, Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2003, especially p. 231-316.
12. Noël Golvers, "The 'Personal' Library of Western Books of Jean-François Foucquet, SJ in Peking (Beitang, 1720) and the Intertextual Situation of a Jesuit Scholar in China", *Monumenta Serica*, 58, 2010, p. 249-280, p. 249. The term "domestica" is not used at St Omers College. See also Golvers, *Libraries of Western Learning for China. Circulation of Western Books between Europe and China in the Jesuit Mission (ca. 1650- ca. 1750)*, vol. 2, *Formation of Jesuit Libraries*, Leuven, Ferdinand Verbiest Institute, 2013.
13. In volume 3 of the same three-volume set, the caption reads "Bibliothecæ communis", confirming that the large library was indeed the common library.
14. London, 1611, title-page. BASO inv. 4752.
15. Golvers, art. cit., p. 250.
16. *Systema bibliothecae collegii Parisiensis Societatis Iesu* (Paris, 1678), p. 7 (cited in Dijkgraaf, p. 235).
17. Dijkgraaf, p. 241.
18. Edith Diehl, *Bookbinding: Its Background and Technique*, New York, Dover Publications, 1980, p. 100-101, and <http://le-bibliomane.blogspot.fr/2009/01/catherine-de-medicis-femme-bibliophile.html> (accessed 17 April 2016). Catherine used this monogram between 1536 and 1547, before her accession to the throne (when she added a crown above the monogram). The significance of this particular motif of the knotted rope, which does not seem to be a widow's *Cordelière*, is unclear.
19. Both Camerarius and the bookseller-publisher Johann Herwagen were on the index, but this particular work was not among the list of forbidden books. The copy held in the library of Castille which is online bears a manuscript annotation from the Inquisition: "Autoris damnati opus vero permissum" and "Expurgado segun el espurgo de 1707 por orden. Del Sto ofi° St. Stan° del Hoyo". There are, however, no traces of expurgation in the Saint-Omer copy. Cf. <http://>

bidicam.castillalamancha.es/bibdigital/bidicam/i18n/catalogo_imagenes/grupo.cmd?path=1537474&posicion=5&presentacion=pagina (Consulted 3 Feb. 2016).

20. Note that the College Library also contained other precious books, which were not marked or included into this reserve. It also contained contentious books (such as books on the index), which do not seem to have been censored.

21. See in particular William H. McCabe, S. J., *An Introduction to the Jesuit Theater: A Posthumous Work*, ed. Louis J. Oldani, S.J., St. Louis, Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1983, and Martin Wiggins, “Shakespeare Jesuited: The Plagiarisms of ‘Pater Clarcus’”, *The Seventeenth Century*, 20.1, 2005, p. 1-21.

22. This question will be fully addressed in Cottegnies's forthcoming article, “The Saint-Omer Shakespeare Folio in its Library”.

23. This set of books marked PS can by no means be described a uniform *Enfer*, however, unlike the *Enfer* of the Séminaire du Québec which Pierrette Lafond studied in her Master's Thesis, *Promenade en Enfer. Les livres à l'index de la bibliothèque (fonds ancien) du Séminaire du Québec : prolégomènes à un objet oxymore* (Département d'histoire, Faculté des Lettres, Université Laval, Québec, 2011). (<http://www.theses.ulaval.ca/2011/27794/27794.pdf>, consulted 23 jan. 2016).

ABSTRACTS

Since the discovery of a Shakespeare First Folio in Saint-Omer (in northern France), in a city library that had integrated the library of the former English Jesuit College of St Omers at the French Revolution, scholars have been speculating about Catholic interest in Shakespeare. In an article published in May 2015 in *Études Épistémè*, Line Cottegnies and Gisèle Venet studied the annotations in the Folio and described, among other things, the curious marking of the book, the letters PS hand-pressed repeatedly throughout at regular intervals. Since then, other similarly-marked books, six in total to date, have emerged in the Saint-Omer rare books collection, and allow us to suggest that the letters PS stand for “Praefectus/i Studiorum”, and that the marked books were placed in a Prefect of Studies’ reserve. This short article mainly aims at describing the PS-marked books that have been identified. We suggest that the marking indicates that PS-marked books were kept separate from the main communal library. This raises in turn some interesting questions about the juxtaposition of the Folio with the other PS-marked books, and this note offers some tentative suggestions to try and explain why it was thus withdrawn from circulation and placed in a reserve or special collection of a Prefect of Studies.

Depuis la découverte d'un in-folio de Shakespeare de 1623 à Saint-Omer dans le nord de la France, dans une bibliothèque municipale qui intégra à la Révolution française la bibliothèque de l'ancien Collège anglais jésuite de St Omers, la communauté scientifique s'interroge sur la nature d'un intérêt catholique pour Shakespeare. Dans un article publié en mai 2015 dans *Études Épistémè*, Line Cottegnies et Gisèle Venet étudiaient les annotations du Folio et décrivaient en particulier les curieuses marques PS à l'encre apposées au poinçon à intervalles réguliers dans l'ouvrage. Depuis, de nouvelles recherches dans le fonds patrimonial de la Bibliothèque d'Agglomération de Saint-Omer ont permis de mettre au jour d'autres ouvrages avec les mêmes marques — six en tout à ce jour. Ils nous permettent de suggérer que les lettres PS renvoient à la forme latin, “Praefectus/i Studiorum”, et que les ouvrages figuraient dans une bibliothèque d'un préfet des études du Collège. Ce court article s'attache principalement à décrire les ouvrages ainsi marqués

par les lettres PS. Il suggère que les marques indiquent une inclusion dans une réserve séparée de la bibliothèque principale. La juxtaposition du Folio avec les six autres ouvrages qui reçurent le même traitement que lui pose à son tour des questions intéressantes : qu'ont donc ces ouvrages en commun ? Pourquoi le Folio fut-il ainsi retiré de la circulation pour être placé dans une réserve ou une bibliothèque séparée ?

INDEX

Keywords: Saint-Omer, Bibliothèque d'Agglomération de Saint-Omer, St Omers College, Jesuit colleges, Shakespeare, Folio, history of libraries, PS, Prefect of Studies, Jesuit education

Mots-clés: Saint-Omer, Bibliothèque d'Agglomération de Saint-Omer, St Omers College, collèges jésuites, Shakespeare, Folio, histoire des bibliothèques, PS, Préfet des études, éducation jésuite

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