

# HEINRICH RANTZAU (1526–1598): patron of the arts and bibliophile



By Peter Zeeberg

*The Holsatian nobleman Heinrich Rantzau (1526–1598) was a keen bibliophile. In addition to assembling a large library, he took active part in book-production himself both indirectly as a patron of writers and directly as a writer and publisher. Firstly the paper presents an overview of Rantzau's production by means of the copies available in Finland and Estonia. Secondly it focuses on the distribution of his books as gifts. In this connection two hitherto unnoticed copies are discussed: one in the National Library of Finland with a hand-written dedication from Rantzau, the other in the University Library in Tartu, Estonia, with his personal binding and signature.*

During the sixteenth century it became clear that the printed book as a medium – a mass-medium even – afforded quite new possibilities. It is well known that Luther and other reformers made skilled use of the new medium for polemics and for the quick distribution of new thoughts. Another example from the same period is Erasmus' *Colloquia Familiaria* – originally a simple school book, but through a long row of editions, each time enlarged with new dialogues, it gradually turned into something more like a journal commenting on questions of current interest.

Here I shall present a figure from the following generation – a man who actually studied with Luther as a young man and presumably learned a lot about the new medium from the milieu in Wittenberg, but who used it in his own way and for his own purposes.

Heinrich Rantzau (1526–1598) was a powerful nobleman and a major statesman within the realm of the Danish king (see Fig. 1). He was governor in Schleswig-Holstein on behalf of three successive Danish kings during most of the second half of the sixteenth century, and an important player in Danish foreign politics.<sup>1</sup>

But he was active in many other fields as well: as an avid collector of art, books, estates and castles, as a patron of arts, especially a patron of writers – and as a writer himself. It is the last part – the books that he either financed or wrote – that we are concerned with here. The background for this is a bibliography of these books which I published in 2004, and which has

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<sup>1</sup> On Heinrich Rantzau's life see Lohmeier 2000b, Skovgaard 1940, Steinmetz 1991.

subsequently become available on the internet.<sup>2</sup> But here I shall focus on the part of the material which is available in the National Library in Helsinki, the University Library in Tartu, and the Academic Library at the University of Tallinn.<sup>3</sup>

Heinrich Rantzau was born in the age of reformation as the eldest son of Johan Rantzau, the general who won the Danish civil war in 1536, thereby putting king Christian III on the throne and securing the Danish Reformation. Heinrich was educated to become a statesman: seven years at Wittenberg university followed by five years at the imperial court. And the humanist education he received in Wittenberg made a lasting impression on him. The arts became not only a hobby, but an integral part of his life as a statesman.

Rantzau's literary activities started at the death of his father 1565 when he published a collection of Latin *elogia* to him, partly written by himself. And over the following 30 years this evolved into a large production of books and prints. My bibliography numbers 264 items, including his own writings as well as books by others which were financed by him and/or dedicated to him. A few of these are only known to us from secondary sources, e.g. from mention in Rantzau's correspondence. But most of them have been preserved in large numbers in libraries all over Europe.

For my bibliography I have mainly used the libraries in Copenhagen, Kiel, Lund, Prague, Rostock and Wolfenbüttel. But let us here take a look at the material that can be found in Finland and Estonia. This material gives a good impression of the various types of books we are dealing with.

First we have a number of books which (or parts of which) are dedicated to Rantzau (numbers in square brackets refer to my bibliography):

David Chytraeus, *Chronicon Saxoniae*, Rostock 1590 [23] (*Helsinki NL*)

David Chytraeus, *Chronicon Saxoniae*, Leipzig 1593 [25] (*Tartu UL*)

David Chytraeus, *Newe Sachssen Chronica*, Leipzig 1597 [29] (*Tartu UL*)

Johannes Glandorpius, *Onomasticon historiae Romanae*, Frankfurt am Main 1589 [83] (*Tartu UL*)

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<sup>2</sup> Zeeberg 2004. Since 2010 the entire bibliography has since been incorporated in the Database of Nordic Neo-Latin Literature ([www.uib.no/neolatin](http://www.uib.no/neolatin)), but in a different form: the bibliographical descriptions of title pages, quires etc. are less detailed, while the contents of the books are described in more detail, and a complete set of incipits of Latin poetry has been added. On Rantzau's literary activities see also Lohmeier 1978, Lohmeier 2000a, Oestmann 2004, Zeeberg 2003. On Rantzau as a patron of art see Steinmetz 1991.

<sup>3</sup> This work has only been possible through the help of one colleague in each country: Sirkka Havu from the National Library of Finland and Kristi Viiding from Tartu University, who looked through the books for me and supplied transcriptions and photos of relevant bindings and handwritten notes. I am highly thankful to both of them.

- Janus Gruterus, *Suspicionum libri IX*, Wittenberg 1591 [86] (*Helsinki NL*)  
Hieronymus Henninges, *Theatrum Genealogicum*, Magdeburg 1598 [94]  
(*Tallinn AL*)  
Albert Meier, *Methodus describendi regiones, urbes et arces [...]*, Helmstedt  
1587 [144] (*Tartu UL*)  
Gerardus Mercator, *Atlas*, Duisburg 1595 [147] (*Helsinki NL*)  
Nikolaus Reusner, *Opera*, Jena 1593 [244–245] (*Helsinki NL*)  
Josephus Scaliger, *De emendatione temporum*, Frankfurt am Main 1593 [254]  
(*Helsinki NL, Tartu UL*)  
Johannes Wernerus Hannoveranus, *Therapeutica*, Frankfurt am Main 1596  
[264] (*Tartu UL*)

Several of these writers were long-time clients of his. Chytraeus was one of his closest collaborators. Through him Rantzau had access to humanists and writers all over Northern Europe, not least in the Baltic area. Others, e.g. Wernerus, are just single dedications from a writer in need of a willing dedicatee. The book by Scaliger was dedicated to Rantzau by the printer, Wechel, who worked for Rantzau several times.

Other books were written and published in some kind of collaboration with Rantzau. Here we find a number of titles which reflect his official position by treating contemporary Danish history or topography in a flattering manner – as instructed by Rantzau:

- Caspar Ens, *Rerum Danicarum Friderico II terra marique gestarum historia*,  
Frankfurt am Main 1593 [61] (*Helsinki NL*)  
Georgius Braunius, *Civitates Orbis Terrarum* [part 4], Cologne 1588 [13]  
(*Helsinki NL*)  
Georgius Braunius, *Civitates Orbis Terrarum* [part 5], Cologne 1598 [14]  
(*Helsinki NL*)  
Johannes Lauterbach, *Epigrammata de rebus gestis Friderici II*, Frankfurt am  
Main 1592 [108] (*Helsinki NL*)

Among these Braunius' work about the cities of Europe is a special case. For several decades he and Rantzau held close contact. Rantzau financed Braunius' work and supplied him with information on the lands of the Danish king – on the basis of which Braunius gave these parts of Europe a highly

flattering and very detailed treatment. Too detailed to Braunius' mind, as it appears, but Rantzau was the one who paid!<sup>4</sup>

Like Chytraeus, Braunius was a central knot in the network of learned correspondents that Rantzau built for himself. Through him Rantzau came in contact not only with humanists in the Netherlands and great parts of Germany, but also with the Catholic world and even with central people within the Roman curia. This network was an important element in his literary activities, both for the production of the books and for their distribution (as we shall see in a moment). But at the same time it was vital to him in his official capacity of a politician and diplomat, as a source of political information for the king of Denmark.

Parallel to these books about the king and his countries, we have a series of books about Rantzau's own possessions:

Nathan Chytraeus, *Variorum in Europa itinerum deliciae*, [s. 1.] 1599 [32] (Helsinki NL)

Georgius Crusius, *Descriptio Bredenbergae*, Strassburg 1573 [46] (Helsinki NL)

Peter Lindeberg, *Hypotyposis arcium, palatiorum ...*, Hamburg 1591 [125] (Helsinki NL)

Peter Lindeberg, *Hypotyposis arcium, palatiorum ...*, Frankfurt am Main 1592 [126] (Helsinki NL)

Erpold Lindenbrog (ed.), *M. Adami historia ecclesiastica*, Leiden 1595 [130] (Helsinki NL)

Albert Lomeier, *Ranzovii descriptio*, Eisleben 1595 [136] (Helsinki NL)

Reiner Reineccius, *Chronicon Alberti, Abbatis Stadensis*, Helmstedt 1587 [237] (Talinn AL)

In Chytraeus we find an exhaustive edition of the inscriptions at Rantzau's many castles and other buildings. Crusius and Lomeier give descriptions of two of these castles: his main residence Breitenburg and the family seat Rantzau, respectively. Lindenbrog's and Reineccius' books are editions of medieval chronicles from manuscripts in Rantzau's library. And in the *Hypotyposis* – by one of Rantzau's most prolific literary collaborators, Peter Lindeberg from Rostock – we find an accumulated description of all his possessions: castles, palaces, books, pyramids, obelisks, stones, mills, fountains, monuments and epitaphs.

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<sup>4</sup> Letter from Braunius to Rantzau, 6 September 1593. Printed in Frobenius [1595], 289–290 [70]. Cf. Zeeberg 1998.

Apart from the actual descriptions of places and monuments, the *Hypotyposis* is an anthology of Latin poetry in praise of Rantzau, his family, his possessions etc., written by a large number of Latin poets, including Rantzau himself. The same is the case with the following:

Andreas Angelus, *Holsteinische Chronica*, Wittenberg 1596 [3] (Helsinki NL)

Georg Ludwig Frobenius, *Epistolae consolatoriae*, Frankfurt am Main (1595) [70] (Helsinki NL)

Hieronimus Henninges, *Genealogiae aliquot familiarum nobilium in Saxonia*, Hamburg 1590 [93] (Helsinki NL)

*Genealogia Ranzoviana*, Helmstedt 1587 [82] (Tallinn AL)

The *Genealogia Ranzoviana* is Rantzau's own genealogy of his family, written by himself or his assistants, and published in at least six different editions between 1585 and 1587. Both Angelus and Henninges are genealogical works with special emphasis on the Rantzau family. Frobenius' book is a collection of letters of consolation received by Rantzau at the deaths of a number of relatives (his parents, his brother, several of his sons etc., and at the death of King Frederick II in 1588.

Finally we have Rantzau's own books:

Heinrich Rantzau [pseud.: Chr. Cilicius Cimber], *Belli Dithmarsici descriptio*, Strassburg 1574 [168] (Helsinki NL, Tartu UL)

Heinrich Rantzau, *Tractatus astrologicus*, Frankfurt am Main 1623 (Helsinki NL)<sup>5</sup>

Jonas von Elvervelt, *De Holsatia*, Hamburg 1592 [60] (Helsinki NL)

Peter Lindeberg, *Historica rerum in Europa gestarum narratio*, Hamburg 1591 [122] (Helsinki NL)

These four cover Rantzau's main interests – apart from himself and his family – namely history, topography and astrology. The first of these is a historical description of his father's last military feat: the conquest of Ditmarschen in 1559.<sup>6</sup> The second one is a collection of texts by Rantzau and (mostly) others on astrological topics. Elvervelt's book consists of poetry about Schleswig-Holstein, supplied with prose descriptions by Rantzau. The last book, again by Lindeberg, is not by Rantzau himself, but a sort of commentary to one of

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<sup>5</sup> This is a later reprint of a book that was printed several times during Rantzau's own time: Frankfurt am Main 1593 [230], [Wittenberg] 1594 [231 + 232].

<sup>6</sup> A modern edition with German translation is available in Rantzau 2009.

Rantzau's own texts, demonstrating that Rantzau's predictions about the year 1588 had been right.

What all these books have in common is Rantzau's presence. Whether they were written and printed on his initiative, as a large number of them were, or just dedicated to him by a client in need of a fee, no reader can miss the fact that Rantzau was involved. Thus this material is interesting as an important source material to patronage and aristocratic self-representation. But to this we should add his correspondence with his clients, which has been preserved to a large degree. We have hundreds of letters between Rantzau and writers, editors, printers etc., which make it possible to take a look behind the scenes.<sup>7</sup>

Let us look at a random example, from the early period: One of Rantzau's earliest publications is a small book on the conservation of health, *De conservanda valetudine*, which was first printed in Leipzig in 1576 [181, later eds.: 182–193]. This was the first book that was published in his own name. His earlier books had either been printed under a pseudonym or under the name of a secretary.

The book was written by Rantzau, but edited by his secretary, Dethlevus Sylvius or Dethlef Wolders.<sup>8</sup> In his dedication to two of Rantzau's sons, Sylvius claims that he had found the manuscript in the library of Rantzau's at castle Breitenburg and had it printed – without Rantzau's knowledge. That, of course, is hard to believe. This reflects the general aversion against literary pursuits among the nobility. Rantzau did not want to appear too active in the field, as that was not considered becoming in a nobleman. Sylvius does much to explain, and even excuse the fact that a nobleman is dealing with the arts and publishing a book. And he stresses that he himself has decided to have the book printed, although the author himself had not wished to do so.<sup>9</sup>

The correspondence tells another story: In 1575 a certain Antonius Caucius, or Kautz, wrote a letter to Rantzau from Leipzig.<sup>10</sup> He seems to have been private teacher or *praeceptor* to some of Rantzau's sons, for in the letter he mentions that the headmaster of the university, Vitus Winshemius, has invited Rantzau's sons to dinner. Then he turns to what he calls Rantzau's "libellus medicus" (small book on medicine), namely the *De conservanda*

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<sup>7</sup> The principal collections of Rantzau letters are: Three volumes of original letters in Vienna, ÖNB Cod. Vindob. 9737 I-n, one volume of copies in Kiel, UBK S. H. 388, one in Schleswig, LSH Abt. 127.21 Handschriften Nr. 293 (previously in the Rantzau family archive at Schloß Breitenburg), and one in Göttingen, SUB prid. 8, Bd. IX, 2. T. To these should be added the printed collection: Frobenius 1593a, 1593b, and [1595].

<sup>8</sup> On Sylvius/Wolders see Zeeberg 2004, 59–60.

<sup>9</sup> For a similar case see Zeeberg 1998, 593 and Zeeberg 2004, 13–14. Cf. Lohmeier 1978b, Zeeberg 2007, 3.

<sup>10</sup> On Caucius/Kautz see Zeeberg 2004, 53–55. Letter, dated 20 March, in Schleswig, LSH, Abt. 127.21 Handschriften Nr. 293, f. 75.

*valetudine*. Caucius says that he has shown the manuscript to a famous doctor, Simonius, who praised it highly, but also suggested some alterations. Then he asks Rantzau for precise instructions as to the publication: He needs to know the number of copies that Rantzau wants to have printed. He also suggests a shorter title – namely the title that the book actually had when it was printed. Apparently as an answer to a question from Rantzau he affirms that Sylvius’ part in the work is sufficiently shown through the dedication. He also suggests that the Rantzau arms should be printed on page 2 with a Latin epigram on its symbolism by another of Rantzau’s clients, the Hamburg poet Henning Conradinus. That – says Caucius – is how other princes and noblemen do it. And finally he writes that he has made some alterations in a poem that was included in the manuscript. That has been a bit difficult, because, as he says: “non enim sum poeta” (I am no poet).

The letter shows how Rantzau used his employees and other contacts: According to the book, it was his secretary who took the initiative to print the work. But the letter shows that actually Rantzau himself was fully in charge. He, not Sylvius, has sent the manuscript to Caucius and asked him to prepare it for print and have it printed. Caucius’ remark that Sylvius’ part in the work was sufficiently shown through the dedication presumably shows that Rantzau was still hesitating about publishing a book in his own name.

That changed in the years that followed, when book-production clearly became an obsession for him, and an activity in which he himself took an active part. Ten years later, in 1585, we find a letter, very similar to the one from Caucius, from another client: Andreas Schato, who was at this time publishing several books for Rantzau, among them an edition of a Greek text – the *Eisagogica* by Paulus Alexandrinus – from a manuscript in Rantzau’s library. The printing had been delayed, and the letter shows that Rantzau was impatiently pressing Schato to return some woodcut plates for his portrait, his arms etc. Now he needed them for other books elsewhere.

There is no reason to believe that the books were not the results of a sincere interest in literature, history, etc. on Rantzau’s part – and, indeed, in promoting and supporting writers of many kinds. As he himself phrased it: “Musas namque colo, musarum cultores amo” (I worship the muses, and I love the worshippers of the muses).<sup>11</sup>

But the aspect of self-promotion and self-representation is equally important. Over the years such paraphernalia as portraits, coats of arms, and laudatory poetry became ever more dominating features. And in many cases, as we have seen, praise of Rantzau and/or his family became the main topic

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<sup>11</sup> Letter to Johannes Heurnius, Segeberg 18 August 1591, Schleswig, LSH Abt. 127.21 Handschriften Nr. 293, f. 862.

of the books. Rantzau's book-production developed into a highly conscious project of self-representation.

Again this is evident from the content of the books themselves, but to get the full picture we must include other material, first of all his letters. As we have seen, Rantzau established a wide-spread network of correspondents among intellectuals. These contacts were essential to his official work as a statesman and diplomat by supplying him with information from abroad – or with further contacts when needed. But basically they were his literary clients, who took part in this book-production as writers, as editors, as contacts to printers etc. And not least: they took part in the distribution of the books.

The self-representation aspect of his books makes real sense only if the books did actually reach the public. And the importance of that is often reflected in the letters. For example, in 1588 Justus Lipsius wrote to Rantzau about some books which Rantzau had tried – in vain – to get printed by Plantin in Antwerp and offered to have them printed by Raphelengius in Leiden instead, adding that they may just as well be distributed to all of Europe from there.<sup>12</sup> Or as another of his contacts wrote concerning the printing of one of his books:

[...] vnd das ehr [*i.e. the printer*] etzliche uberdruckt, kunte der herr stadthalter meines erachtens, auch wol leiden, so werden die exemplaria fern spargieret, vnd were dem hern stadthalter eine ehre.<sup>13</sup>

and to my mind, you, Governor, might well accept that he [*i.e. the printer*] prints too many copies. In this way the copies will be widely distributed, and you will win glory.

But the diffuse distribution through normal sale did not suffice for Rantzau. To have the right effect the books must reach the right people. The letters show how Rantzau bought a number of copies of each book – 50, 100 or more – and had them distributed as gifts to important persons all over Europe. In the letters we can see how Rantzau's contacts in various parts of Northern Europe sent copies of his books to important persons, not least rulers and politicians, in their respective areas. That is the case with among others David Chytraeus in Rostock, Georg Rollenhagen in Magdeburg, Paulus Melissus in Heidelberg, Justus Lipsius in Leiden, and Georg Braunius in Cologne. All of these scholars had widespread networks of their own. In this way Rantzau

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<sup>12</sup> Letter from Justus Lipsius, November 1588, Schleswig, LSH Abt. 127.21 Handschriften Nr. 293, f. 570.

<sup>13</sup> Post scriptum attached to a letter from Petrus Albinus, 11 May 1587, Vienna, ÖNB lat. 9737 n., f. 178 sqq., but presumably rather belonging to a now lost letter from Peter Lindeberg.

could reach the right target group without knowing the persons beforehand himself.

But of course he also sent books directly to friends and contacts, and in many cases this is mentioned in his correspondence. In my bibliography I have made a list of these recipients, and this has been supplied from other material, namely the actual gift-copies of his books, which can be found in libraries all over Europe. By including both extant books with hand-written dedications and references in letters to or from Rantzau I have made a list of 85 recipients of books as presents from Rantzau.<sup>14</sup>

This list is not the result of an organized search for gift copies. It only represents what I have accidentally come across during my work on the bibliography. Therefore it is not surprising that the material from Helsinki and Tartu have supplied two hitherto unnoticed specimens.

At the National Library in Helsinki we find a copy of Hieronymus Henninges, *Genealogiae aliquot familiarum nobilium in Saxonia*, Hamburg 1590.<sup>15</sup> As already mentioned, this is a genealogical work. It first appeared in 1587 (without place of print) as a slim volume of genealogies of noble families from the northern German region, including the Rantzaus. This second edition, though, was made on Rantzau's initiative and for his purposes – indeed, it seems that it was made without the original author's knowledge altogether.<sup>16</sup> Here the original short chapter on the Rantzaus had swelled into an extensive, richly illustrated anthology of poetry about Heinrich Rantzau and his family.

On the first guard-leaf of the Helsinki copy we find the following hand-written dedication in German (see Fig. 2):

Dem Edlen vnd Ernuesten J[...] G[ ...]t  
hat der auch Edler, Gestrenger vnd Ernuester  
her Heinrich Ranzouw Zum Breitenburg, Kon[iglicher]  
May[estät] zu dennemarcken, In den Furstenthumben  
Schleßwich, Holstein vnd der Dithmarschen Stadt  
halter, diß buch verehret A[nn]o. 1590  
Seins Alters 65.  
  
Heinrich Rantzow V(icarius) R(egius)  
Anno D(omi)nj 1590  
Ætatis 65.

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<sup>14</sup> Zeeberg 2004, 261–273. The Royal Library in Copenhagen alone has 23 copies of Ranzoviana with handwritten dedications.

<sup>15</sup> National Library, Helsinki, shelf-mark H MD.701.I.15, Zeeberg 2004 no. 93.

<sup>16</sup> Zeeberg 2003, 542–543.

This book was presented to the noble and honourable ... .. by the likewise noble, brave and honourable Herr Heinrich Rantzau of Breitenburg, governor on behalf of his majesty the king of Denmark in the principalities of Schleswig, Holstein and Dithmarschen, in the year 1590, his own 65th year. Heinrich Rantzau, viceroy, A.D. 1590, 65 years of age.

The main text is written by a scribe. The signature (i.e. the last three lines), which, unlike the main text, is in Latin, is in Rantzau's own hand. This is the standard formula in most of Rantzau's hand-written dedications. The only thing that varies is the language of the text written by the scribe: German is used for noblemen and others who cannot be expected to read Latin, while Latin is used for learned people.<sup>17</sup> The signature, however, is generally in Latin as the formulae involved here will have been understandable to everybody. It was evidently important to Rantzau to present himself as a learned man, no matter whom he was addressing. And that, of course, was exactly what he signaled by presenting a book in the first place.

In this case the recipient is evidently a nobleman, but unfortunately the name has been erased with a broad smear of ink. The first name seems to have begun with a *J*, and the third (?) letter might well be an *h*. *Johann* is the most likely suggestion. The surname seems to have begun with a *G* and ended with a *t*. If so, this is not one of the already known recipients of Rantzau's books. Whoever the recipient was, he got the book in the year of publication, which seems to be quite characteristic.

The other book is in the University Library in Tartu, Estonia.<sup>18</sup> It is a composite volume, including two of Rantzau's central titles within one binding. These are his own pseudonymous *Belli Dithmarsici descriptio*, Strassburg 1574 [168], published under the name of Chr. Cilicius Cimber, and: Albert Meier, *Methodus describendi regiones, urbes et arces* [...], Helmstedt 1587 [144].

The binding is original, a white parchment binding with the following text in black on the front (see Fig. 3):

HINRICVS | RANZOVI(vs) | REGIS DAN|IE VICARI(vs) | ANNO  
D(o)M(ini) | 1587 | ANNVM AG|ENS AETATS [!] | 62.

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<sup>17</sup> A similar example, also in German, dedicated to count Wolff Ernst von Stollberg, is reproduced in Zeeberg 2004, 32.

<sup>18</sup> Shelf-mark R XIIIb 1932:836. The book came to the library in 1932 as a gift from the local boys' grammar school (Poeglaste humanitaargümnaasium). Apart from that the provenance is unknown, but according to the staff at the libraries department for rare books and manuscripts a local manor house library is a possibility.

Heinrich Rantzau, viceroy to the King of Denmark, in the year 1587, 62 years of age.

On the back is the coat of arms of the Rantzau family. These coats of arms, which were used as super ex libris on the books in his private library, are known in several versions. This is the rare round version with the text “\*HINRIC\* \*RANZAW\* \*STATHOLDER\*”.<sup>19</sup>

On the guard-leaf, facing the title page, is Heinrich Rantzau’s signature in his own hand: “Hinricus Ranzovius V(icarius) R(egius)” (see Fig. 4).

Rantzau used these bindings both for gift copies like the one we have just seen, and for the books in his own library at Breitenburg. In many cases the gift copies have the dedication directly on the cover: the name of the recipient on the front, and the name of the donor and the year on the back, all in Latin.<sup>20</sup> The books from his library normally have his or both his and his wife’s coats of arms as super ex libris, in some cases also his name, and age as on the Tartu volume. In addition to this the books from the library normally have a handwritten owner’s mark on the flyleaf, in the form of a Latin hexameter: “Hic liber Henrici est equitis cognomine Ranzow” (this book belongs to Heinrich, knight, by the surname of Rantzau). The library was looted by Wallenstein in 1624. Large parts of it were taken to Prague, where they are now in the National Library. Others were sold and can be found all over Europe.<sup>21</sup>

Isak Collijn described a volume very similar to the one at Tartu: in a similar binding, but without the hexameter. As he had found the exact same binding including the same two titles in two copies, one in Prague and one in Uppsala, he concluded that they must have been gifts.<sup>22</sup> That is not at all implausible considering what we have already heard: that Rantzau in many cases distributed his books by sending them to his contacts in other parts of Germany and asking them to find recipients for them. These may therefore be gift copies meant for distribution to people that Rantzau did not know. And the same may well be the case with the Tartu volume.

On the other hand it seems a bit strange that Rantzau would send out a 13-year-old book for this kind of distribution, even if combined with a brand new one. Collijn’s volumes combined two recent publications, one from 1587 and one from 1588. We do know of gift volumes that include both new and old

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<sup>19</sup> A complete catalogue of these ex-libris can be found in Collijn 1941. The round version is treated on p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> One example is depicted in Zeeberg 2004, 30–31.

<sup>21</sup> On the library at Breitenburg and the characteristics of its books see Collijn 1933, Collijn 1939, Collijn 1940, Collijn 1941.

<sup>22</sup> Collijn 1941, 3.

books, but they were all presented to named recipients, whom Rantzau knew personally.<sup>23</sup>

We cannot be completely sure whether the Tartu volume was meant as a gift or belonged to Rantzau's personal library. But in any case both it and the Helsinki volume testify to Heinrich Rantzau's great love of books and his awareness of the possibilities that the medium afforded.

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<sup>23</sup> Zeeberg 2004, 265 (duke John Adolf of Gottorf), 269 (Henrik Ramel), 271 (Heinrich Sudermann).

**Manuscripts and archival documents**

**Göttingen, Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek (SUB)**

prid. 8. Bd. IX. 2. T

**Kiel, Universitätsbibliothek (UBK)**

S. H. 388

**Schleswig, Landesarchiv Schleswig-Holstein (LSH)**

Abt. 127.21 Handschriften Nr. 293

**Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (ÖNB)**

Cod. Vindob. 9737 1-n

**Bibliography**

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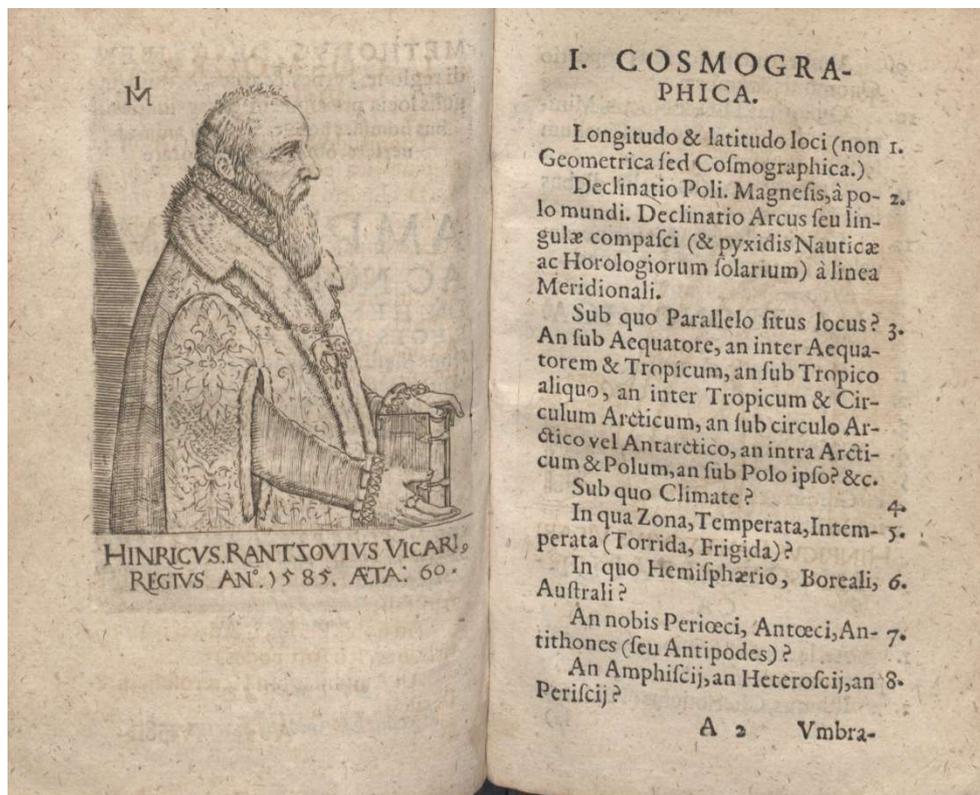
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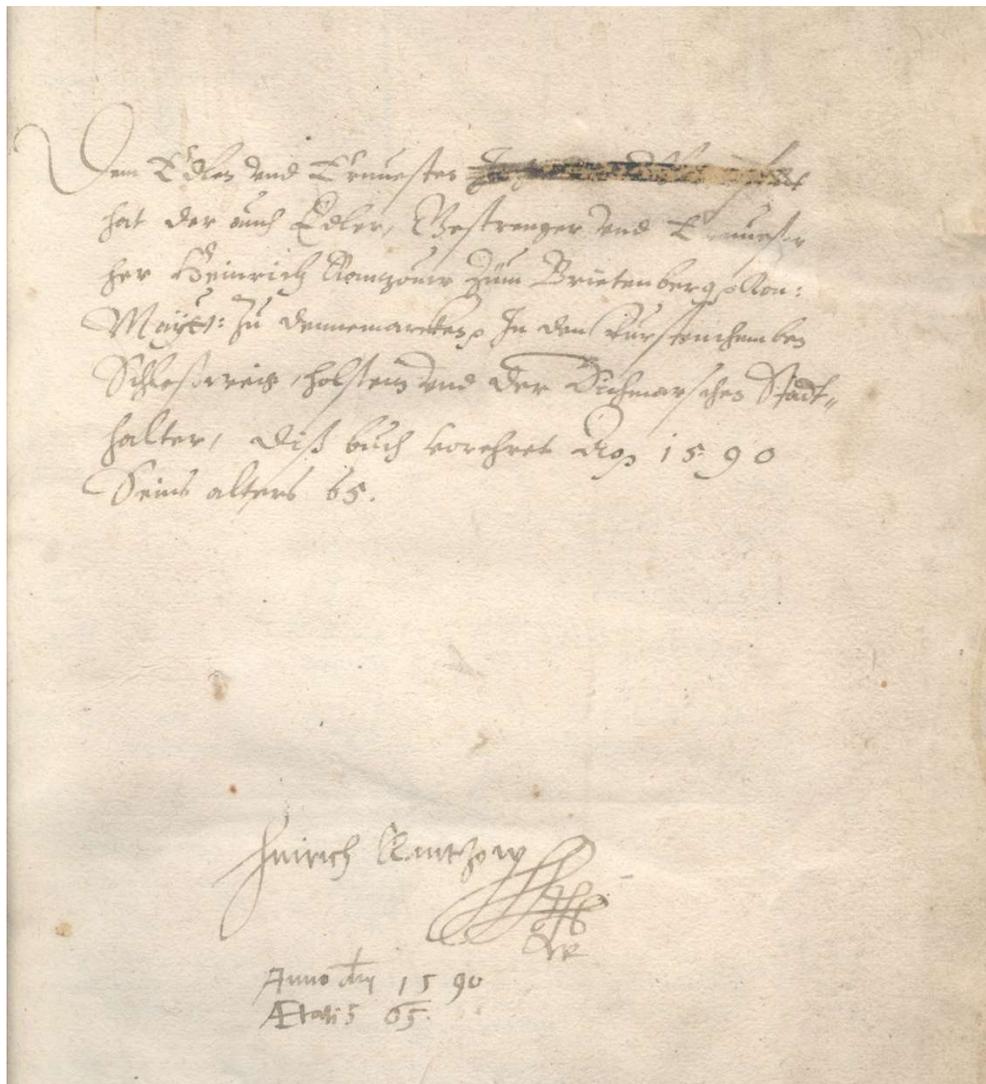
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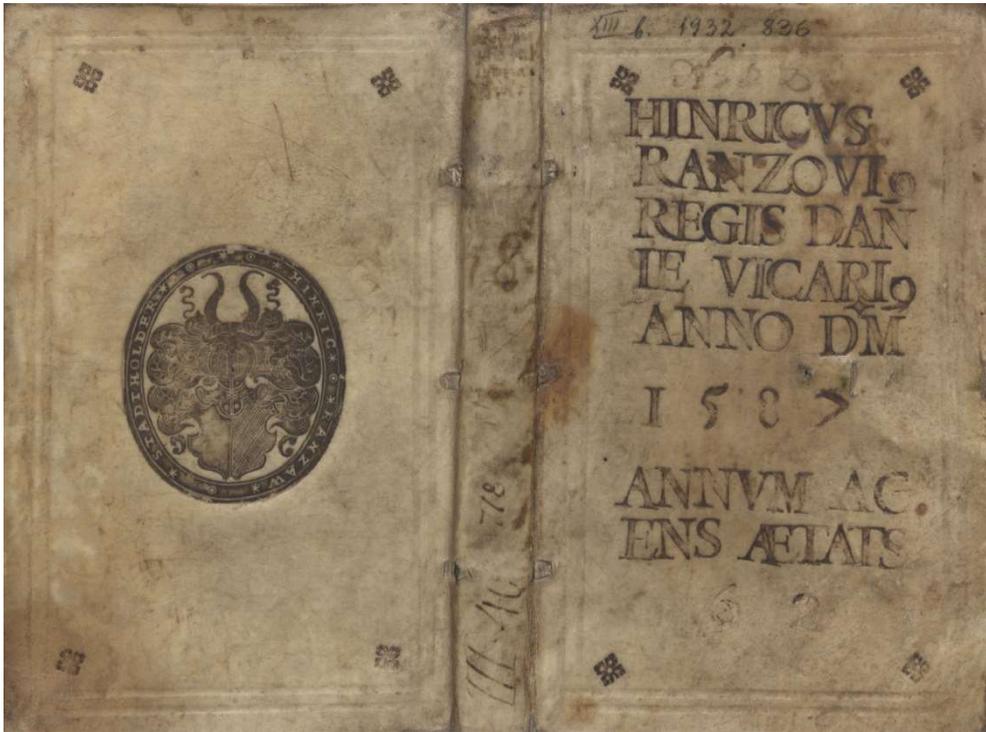
**Fig. 1**

Copper plate portrait of Rantzau from Albert Meier's *Methodus describendi regiones, urbes et arces* [...], Helmstedt 1587. The University Library, Tartu, shelf-mark R XIIIb 1932:836.



**Fig. 2**

Dedication in the Helsinki volume of Hieronymus Henninges, *Genealogiae aliquot familiarum nobilium in Saxonia*, Hamburg 1590. National Library, Helsinki, shelf-mark H MD.701.I.15.



**Fig. 3**

Binding of the Tartu composite volume of Rantzau's *Belli Dithmarsici descriptio*, Strassburg 1574 and Albert Meier's *Methodus describendi regiones, urbes et arces* [...], Helmstedt 1587. The University Library, Tartu, shelf-mark R XIIIb 1932:836.

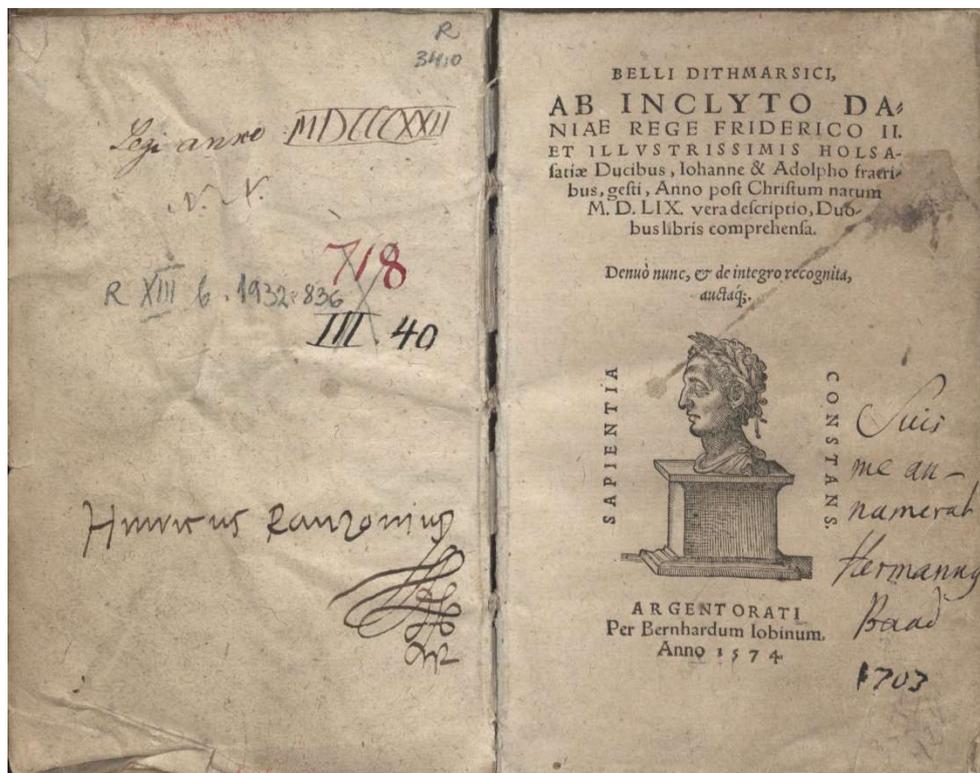


Fig. 4

Flyleaf and title page of the Tartu composite volume of Rantzau's *Belli Dithmarsici descriptio*, Strassburg 1574 and Albert Meier's *Methodus describendi regiones, urbes et arces* [...], Helmsted 1587. The University Library, Tartu, shelf-mark R XIIIb 1932:836.