

THE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN DESCARTES

AND

HENRICUS REGIUS

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## Regius to Descartes [Santpoort]

[8/] 18 August 1638

*Vie*, II, 2–3 [A], 7–8 [B] (no. 1).  
 AT, II, 305–306 [B] (no. 136).

[A]

[*I.m.*: Lettr. MSS. de Regius.<sup>1</sup>] [...] il [Regius] était revenu dans le lieu de sa naissance vers le temps auquel M. Renery avait été appelé de Deventer pour y professer la Philosophie.<sup>2</sup> [*I.m.*: Item instrum. Acad. Ultraject.<sup>3</sup>] Il s’y était procuré même une espèce d’établissement par un mariage, qui ne l’empêcha pas de hanter  
 5 M. Renery avec l’assiduité d’un écolier, depuis qu’il eût goûté, et qu’il eût reconnu son mérite.<sup>4</sup> L’amitié étroite qu’ils lièrent ensemble fut suivie d’une confiance entière que M. de Roy eût en M. Renery. Celui-ci s’en servit avantageusement pour le dégager insensiblement de ses préjugés, et il lui communiqua cette méthode  
 10 excellente qu’il avait reçu de M. Descartes pour conduire sa raison dans la recherche de toutes sortes de vérités. M. de Roy [...] ne borna point sa reconnaissance à M. Renery; mais il la fit remonter jusqu’à M. Descartes, pour lequel il conçut dès lors une haute estime, accompagnée d’une vénération profonde. Ce n’étaient encore jusque-là que les fruits de leurs conversations.<sup>5</sup> Le livre de M. Descartes vint ensuite à paraître.<sup>6</sup> M. Regius fut des plus ardents à le lire, et l’estime qu’il avait conçu

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- 1 Although Baillet refers to multiple letters by Regius, his main source for text A is R/D 1. See my commentary.
- 2 Since 1631, Renery taught philosophy at the Illustrious School in Deventer, but on 18/28 January 1634, he signed a contract with the Utrecht magistrates. Sometime after Easter 1634, he moved to Utrecht and went to live in ‘Oudmunstertrans’, a street which is nowadays called ‘Trans’. Cf. *Resolutiën*, 28, 37; DE VRIJER 1917, 17.
- 3 The reference is unclear. It probably refers to *Narratio historica* (NH), the official account by the Academic Senate of the crisis over Cartesianism at Utrecht University, which document is, however, irrelevant to text A.
- 4 Regius married Maria de Swart in Utrecht on 21/31 January 1634. Soon after the marriage, Regius moved from Naarden to Utrecht, and Baillet’s information confirms that he moved into the house in the ‘Oudmunstertrans’ bought by his wife in 1629 (GAU, ‘Transporten en plechten’). For Regius’ studies and occupations before 1634, see my *Regius Chronicle*. Maria de Swart (†1670) came from a Utrecht family connected with magistracy (cf. GRAEVIUS 1679, 15; DE VRIJER 1917, 16–17).
- 5 Renery appears to have been quite an advocate of Descartes in Utrecht. Next to Regius, both Antonius Æmilius and Martin Schoock bear witness to his enthusiastic conversations on Descartes’ philosophy (cf. ÆM/D 5 and my commentary on ÆM/D 5, *Context*; see also note 7 below). But Schoock recalls that it was impossible to meet the philosopher himself; Renery would not reveal Descartes’ whereabouts saying he was a solitary person (SCHOOCK 1643, [III]/*Querelle*, 157–158). Even Regius never met Descartes before 1639, although he stayed in Utrecht in 1635.
- 6 Descartes’ *Discours de la méthode* and the accompanying *Essais*, published in Leiden by J. Maire in 1637 (AT VI). For its detailed commentary, Gilson’s edition (DESCARTES 1930) remains invaluable. Two interesting collections of studies are BELGIOIOSO 1990 and MÉCHOULAN 1988.

15 pour M. Descartes se tourna incontinent en une vraie passion.<sup>7</sup> Elle lui fit oublier  
 peu à peu les considérations qui l'avaient empêché jusqu'à lors de rechercher sa  
 connaissance par lui-même, et de lui présenter ses respects immédiatement. Il  
 demeura encore près d'un an dans cette réserve, croyant devoir s'étudier à mériter  
 l'amitié de ce grand homme, avant que de la lui demander. Non content de s'être  
 20 imprimé dans l'esprit les principes de sa nouvelle Philosophie, dont il avait trouvé  
 les Essais dans son | livre conformes à ce que Monsieur Reneri lui en avait appris 3  
 auparavant, et de les avoir adoptés à la place de ceux qu'on lui avait autrefois  
 enseignés dans les Écoles, il se mit en devoir de les digérer encore pour l'usage des  
 autres. Il enseignait actuellement la Philosophie, et la Médecine à des particuliers  
 25 dans la ville: et pour ne point faire diversion à l'étude particulière qu'il faisait de  
 la Philosophie de Monsieur Descartes, il s'avisa de la mettre par cahiers, et de la  
 débiter à ses écoliers sous le nom de Physiologie, à mesure qu'il la comprenait.  
 [I.m.: Tom. 3 des Lettres de Desc. pag. 4(0)6.<sup>8</sup> Epist. ad P. Dinetum artic. 15.<sup>9</sup>] La  
 simplicité de l'hypothèse, le bel enchaînement des principes et des raisonnements,  
 30 la netteté et la facilité avec laquelle il leur en faisait déduire les vérités, les ravit  
 de telle sorte, que sans en demeurer aux termes d'une reconnaissance ordinaire  
 pour le maître à qui ils étaient si redevables, ils firent une espèce de ligue pour

7 Regius shared this 'passion' for Cartesianism with Reneri. In March 1638, the latter apologised to Marin Mersenne for his silence, as his academic duties left him hardly any time for correspondence (AT II 101–102/CM VII 113–117). In his public lectures he endeavoured to refute the errors of the *philosophia vulgaris*, and he spent his rare free moments on studying Descartes' *Géométrie*, and on observations and experiments. But he confides to Mersenne that he is able to consult Descartes about these matters, whom he therefore calls *mea lux, mea sol* (Reneri had in fact just returned from a five weeks' stay with Descartes, see Reneri's letter to De Wilhem, 28 February 1638, in DIBON 1990, 216–218). Considering the Frenchman as one of the most learned and inspiring men of his time, he cites Virgil's *Erit ille mihi semper Deus* (*Bucolica*, I, 7). Reneri predicts that Descartes' natural philosophy and his method will be the only one accepted among the right-minded.

8 '[...] j'ay receu cete semaine mesme des lettres d'un Docteur [Regius] que je n'ay jamais vû ny connu, et qui neanmoins me remercie fort affectueusement de ce que je l'ay fait devenir Professeur en une université où je n'ay ny amis ny pouvoir; mais j'apprens qu'ayant enseigné en particulier quelque chose de ce que j'ay fait imprimer à des escoliers de ce lieu-là, ils y ont pris tel goust qu'ils ont tous prié le magistrat de leur donner ce professeur', Descartes to Mersenne, 23 August 1638, in: CLE III 406 (*Vie* accidentally gives pagenummer 46), AT II 334/CM VIII 62 (autograph). Descartes' remark that he has no friends at Utrecht University, is beside the truth (see my commentary on Regius' appointment).

9 'Doctor quidam Medicinae, vir acerrimi ac perspicacissimi ingenii [Regius] [...] legit Dioptricam meam et Meteora, cum primum edita sunt in lucem, ac statim aliqua in iis verioris Philosophiae principia contineri judicavit. Quae colligendo diligentius, et alia ex iis deducendo, ea fuit sagacitate, ut intra paucos menses integram inde Physiologiam concinnarit, quae, cum privatim a nonnullis visa esset, eis sic placuit, ut Professionem Medicinae, ibi tunc forte vacantem, pro illo, qui antea ipsam non ambiebat, a Magistratu petierint et impetrarint', *Epistola ad Patrem Dinet*, AT VII 582–583 (Baillet refers to DESCARTES 1673). Two points need comment. First, Descartes is mistaken about the vacancy of the chair; it was in fact newly created. Second, Descartes' claim that by 1638 Regius had completed his *Physiologia*, is exaggerated. As is evident from R/D 6B, ll. 1–3, Regius was still working on it in the spring of 1639. It is not certain that Regius mentioned his project of a Cartesian workbook in R/D 1, as any reference to it is absent in text B. Baillet's statement that the *Physiologia* received an approbation by the magistrates is in any case false (*Vie*, II, 6).

coopérer à son avancement, et pour s’employer à le faire mettre en place, soit dans le Conseil de Ville, soit dans l’Université.

[B]

Il [Regius] crut avoir toute l’obligation du succès de cette affaire à M. Descartes, dont la philosophie avait formé en lui ce mérite qui l’avait fait préférer aux autres concurrents.<sup>10</sup> La place qu’il occupait lui donnant un degré de hardiesse plus qu’il n’avait auparavant, il se défit du scrupule qui l’avait empêché jusque-là de lui écrire en droiture pour lui présenter ses respects.<sup>11</sup> Afin de ne pas rendre sa modestie ou sa timidité suspecte d’ingratitude, il prit la liberté de lui écrire le XVIII d’Août [*i.m.*: Lettre I de Regius MS.] pour le remercier d’un service qu’il lui avait rendu sans le savoir. Il lui demanda la grâce d’être reçu au nombre de ses serviteurs, avantage qu’il avait recherché et qu’il croyait avoir mérité depuis qu’il s’était rendu son disciple. Et pour ne lui point faire un mystère d’une chose qu’il ne pouvait savoir, c’est-à-dire de la manière dont il prétendait que M. Descartes l’avait fait Professeur dans l’Université, il lui fit un détail de la connaissance qu’il avait acquise de sa méthode et de sa philosophie, premièrement par la bouche de M. Reneri, qui l’avait amplement informé des qualités héroïques de son esprit, et ensuite par la lecture des Essais qu’il avait publiés l’année précédente.<sup>12</sup> Il lui marqua ensuite comment il s’était heureusement servi de cette méthode pour enseigner sa philosophie à quelques particuliers suivant ses principes; et il lui apprit que le grand succès de cette entreprise avait porté les Magistrats de la ville et les Professeurs de l’Université à le choisir pour remplir la chaire de nouvelle érection.<sup>13</sup> Il le conjura de ne point abandonner *son propre ouvrage*,<sup>14</sup> et de ne point lui refuser les assistances nécessaires pour soutenir cette première réputation. Il lui protesta que de son côté il ferait tout ce qui dépendrait de lui pour ne rien faire qui fût indigne de la qualité de son disciple qu’il préférerait à tous les autres avantages de sa vie; et qu’il suivrait les pas de M. Reneri le plus près qu’il lui serait possible.

10 Regius was appointed professor *extra ordinem* of theoretical medicine on 11/21 July 1638, at a salary of 400 guilders a year, on condition that on top of four lectures a week he would teach botany during the summer as well. His inauguration took place on 6/16 September 1638 (*Resolutiën*, 127–128). NH relates that besides Regius two other candidates were recommended (NH, 9–10/*Querelle*, 84). Their names are not mentioned specifically, but one of them may be Antonius Deusing (1612–1666), who afterwards became professor of physics and mathematics in Harderwijk, and in 1646 professor of medicine at Groningen University (cf. *Querelle*, 462, n. 12; NNBW, VIII, 383).

11 Cf. text A, ll. 17–19.

12 Cf. text A, ll. 6–15 and R/D 3, ll. 8–9.

13 Cf. text A, ll. 24–25.

14 What is meant here is not Descartes’ own work but Regius himself, insofar as he owed his appointment to his being a Cartesian.

25 Pour se mettre d'abord en possession des droits attachés | à cette qualité, il  
 prit la liberté de lui envoyer ses *Essais de Médecine*, qui n'étaient autre chose  
 que des notes assez courtes sur Trincavel, et le pria de les examiner avec toute  
 la sévérité d'un maître.<sup>15</sup> Il passa même, appuyé sur l'expérience que M. Reneri  
 lui avait donnée de ses bontés, jusqu'à lui demander les objections qui lui avaient  
 30 été faites depuis peu contre *la circulation du sang*, avec les réponses qu'il y avait  
 données.<sup>16</sup> Et pour lui faire voir jusqu'où pourrait aller la confiance avec laquelle  
 il voulait lui abandonner son esprit comme son cœur, il lui dit nettement qu'il ne  
 lui viendrait aucune difficulté qu'il ne lui proposât, et dont il n'espérât de lui les  
 solutions, comme d'un homme à qui il prétendait tout devoir, et qu'il regardait  
 35 comme extraordinairement suscité pour conduire la raison des autres hommes, et  
 les tirer de leurs anciennes erreurs.

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## COMMENTARY

*Date*

Baillet gives the date of the letter, 18 August 1638, without indication of the calendar used. Descartes, however, mentions Regius' letter in his letter to Mersenne of 23 August 1638, which rules out that it can date from 18 [28] August.<sup>17</sup> The exact date of the letter is therefore [8/] 18 August 1638.

*Text*

Two passages in Baillet's *Vie* constitute our knowledge of R/D 1. The selection of text B is straightforward, as Baillet clearly indicates he is discussing Regius' first letter

<sup>15</sup> Victorius Trincavellius (1496–1568) studied in Padua and in Bologna, where he graduated. After his studies, he returned to his native city Venice, where he took a chair in philosophy and became a well-known physician. In 1551, he was appointed professor of medicine at Padua University. He was the first to study Hippocrates in the original Greek language, and approached the art of medicine without prejudice or superstition. Next to numerous editions of classical authors and commentaries on Galen, he published about nearly every branch of medicine. BLA, IV, 637. According to Graevius (GRAEVIUS 1679, 16), Regius started his lessons at the university by lecturing on Johannes Heurnius' *Institutiones medicinae* (Leiden: ex off. Plantiniana ap. F. Raphelengium, 1592; J. Maire, 1627<sup>5</sup>).

<sup>16</sup> Reference to the dispute between Descartes and the professor of medicine in Leuven, Vopiscus Fortunatus Plempius. In early 1638, Plemp brought forward several objections to Descartes' defense of the circulation of the blood and his explanation of the heartbeat, resulting in a short exchange of letters. Descartes failed to convince Plemp of his theory of the heartbeat, but the Leuven professor eventually accepted the circulation of the blood, be it along Harveyan lines. Regius indeed received Plemp's objections and Descartes' replies (see R/D 11B). Regius also possessed copies of Descartes' replies to the Leuven professor of theology, Libertus Fromondus or Froidmont (1587–1653), which he probably received together with the correspondence with Plemp (Descartes to Plemp for Fromondus, 3 October 1637, AT I 412–430; cf. *Physiologia* VI, 98 (Appendix, 245, ll. 26–27)). Descartes' correspondence with Plemp is analysed in FRENCH 1989, 73–81 and GRENE 1993.

<sup>17</sup> CM VIII 62/AT II 334. The relevant passage is cited in R/D 1, n. 8.

to Descartes. Text A, however, is at first sight tied to the correspondence only by a non-specific reference in the text's margin to Regius' letters (l. 1). The text is not in AT, probably because there are no clear allusions to the correspondence in the main text. Nevertheless, text A is a source of information on R/D 1. In text B, Baillet mentions several subjects raised by Regius in R/D 1 without going into much detail. The reason seems to be that he already developed these themes earlier in his *Vie*, that is, in text A. The subjects in question are, first, how Regius came to know Reneri and made himself acquainted with the New Philosophy (A: 'il était revenu ... passion', ll. 1–15; B: 'il lui fit ... précédente', ll. 12–15; cf. R/D 3, ll. 8–9). Second, Regius' hesitations about contacting Descartes personally (A: 'Elle ... demander', ll. 15–19; B: 'il se défit ... respects', ll. 4–5). And finally, that Regius initiated his pupils to the principles of Cartesianism. His pupils subsequently urged the magistrates to appoint him professor at the university (A: 'Non ... l'Université', ll. 19–34; B: 'Il lui marqua ... érection', ll. 15–20). Although Baillet does not say which letters exactly he uses in text A, the parallels between A and B strongly suggest that R/D 1 is his main source.

### *Context*

#### *1. The first contact between Descartes and Regius*

Baillet expatiates upon the circumstances of the first contacts between Descartes and Regius, but he is basically wrong. Information to correct Baillet's report became available with Roth's publication in 1926 of the Descartes–Huygens correspondence. Because Baillet's story is still the prevailing view,<sup>18</sup> I first summarise his account before turning to a letter published by Roth.

According to Baillet (*Vie*, II, 7–10), Reneri visited Descartes in early August 1638. He informed Descartes of the foundation of a second chair in Medicine at the University of Utrecht, and told him that Regius, the chair's intended candidate, was a professed follower of his philosophy. Back in Utrecht, Reneri informed Regius that Descartes would be pleased to meet him. However, as Regius lacked the opportunity to visit Descartes straightaway — the academic holiday during the summer fair had come to an end — he addressed himself to the French philosopher by letter. As indicated by Baillet, Descartes received this letter on 20 August, as part of a package sent by Reneri, and he immediately wrote back to both Regius and Reneri. He congratulated the latter on the successful introduction of his philosophy at Utrecht University, and allowed him to take Regius with him on his next visit. Reneri, however, became seriously ill and was unable to introduce Regius personally to Descartes, and that induced Regius to write a second letter (R/D 3) asking Descartes' permission to visit him on his own.

Baillet's report needs to be revised in the light of an autograph letter to Huygens published by Roth. The autograph is interesting for two things. First, it reveals the date of the letter, 19 August 1638, and second, it has a few extra lines not previously published in CLE: 'J'avois escrit ce qui precede lors que Mr Reneri arrive icy ...' (ROTH 1926, 84/AT II 672; cf. AT II 348–352). When he copied out the draft, Descartes

<sup>18</sup> SASSEN 1941, 42–43; RODIS-LEWIS 1995, 135–136.

added the passage, because Reneri brought back a package, which three months earlier Descartes himself had sent via Reneri to Alphonse Pollot, a friend of both Descartes and Huygens.<sup>19</sup> However, Pollot being captured by the Spanish near Kallo (near Antwerp) in June, the package came back undelivered and was returned to Descartes by Reneri on the 19th of August. Descartes explains the situation to Huygens and sends him the package, to be forwarded to Pollot as soon as he is released.<sup>20</sup>

This information enables us to correct Baillet's version on several points. First, Baillet is mistaken about Reneri's visit in early August: the autograph reveals that Reneri arrived in Santpoort on 19 August.<sup>21</sup> Next, Regius' letter to Descartes was not sent by mail, but was personally delivered by Reneri.<sup>22</sup> Baillet's claim that Regius' letter arrived in Santpoort on 20 August can also be discarded. Believing that it was sent *by mail* on the 18<sup>th</sup>, Baillet guessed that it took two days for the letter to travel from Utrecht to Santpoort. Further, if Reneri was able to come and see Descartes on 19 August, Baillet's statement that Regius could not come because the summer vacation had ended cannot hold, for Regius and Reneri taught at the same university. Indeed, term would not begin before 15/25 August.<sup>23</sup> Finally, Descartes' letter to Reneri mentioned by Baillet probably never existed because Reneri was with Descartes.<sup>24</sup>

## 2. Regius' appointment at the University of Utrecht

When the academic senate discussed the erection of a second chair in medicine, Reneri pushed Regius forward as a candidate (NH, 9–11/*Querelle*, 83–85). Regius won the support of Liraeus and of the rector, Bernardus Schotanus, whom he knew from his student days in Franeker. For a moment, rumour of Regius' heterodoxy in religious matters threatened his chances. Alarmed, Schotanus and Liraeus consulted Voetius, who then accompanied Liraeus to confront Regius with the accusation. The latter assured them of his orthodoxy, and proved it by showing a certificate to that effect by the Reformed Church Council of Naarden.<sup>25</sup> This satisfied Liraeus and Voetius, and paved the way for Regius' appointment.

<sup>19</sup> The package contained Descartes' reply to 15 questions Pollot put to him after reading the *Discours* (AT II 34–46), and possibly a special copy of Descartes' *Géométrie* (AT I 518). Cf. AT II 673 and 728 (note to AT II 34).

<sup>20</sup> Huygens already knew Pollot had been taken prisoner. In a letter of 24 June 1638 to the Princess of Orange, Amalia van Solms (1602–1675), he listed Pollot among the prisoners of war she knew personally (HUYGENS 1911–1917, II, 369). In June 1638, the Dutch army attempted to capture the forts on the Scheldt near Antwerp. After a successful start, the campaign ended in disaster. The Spanish troops recaptured the fortress of Kallo on 21 June, taking over 2200 prisoners of war. The majority were still in captivity towards the end of January 1639. See HUYGENS 1911–1917, II, 363, 366–369, 373; TEN RAA/DE BAS 1911–1964, IV, 101–106; ISRAEL 1995, 536.

<sup>21</sup> Baillet's source of Reneri's visit is Descartes' letter to Mersenne of 23 August 1638, which does not specify the exact date of the visit (cf. AT II 330–331/CM VIII 58–59, and *Vie*, II, 10).

<sup>22</sup> The only possible source for Baillet's knowledge of the package in question is R/D 1. Perhaps Reneri had allowed Regius to read Descartes' replies to Pollot.

<sup>23</sup> See our introductory note on Utrecht University.

<sup>24</sup> It is difficult to see what induced Baillet to believe Descartes did write to Reneri. Perhaps he simply assumed that since Reneri had sent Descartes a package, the latter would have been obliged to answer.

<sup>25</sup> In 1631, being rector of the Latin school in Naarden, Regius had to take the formal pledge of adhering to the confessional basis of the Dutch Reformed Church, which he initially refused. Regius' obtrusive behaviour towards the Naarden Church Council and the Classis of Amsterdam, resulted in an accusation of



NH does not reveal why Regius was preferred to his competitors. But in his letter to Descartes Regius leaves no room for doubt: he owed his appointment at the university to his knowledge of the New Philosophy. According to Regius, his teaching of the New Philosophy to his pupils proved to be a great success, which did not escape the magistrates. Regius' report is surely onesided, and contradicts NH, which stipulates that Regius actually promised not to deviate from traditional medicine (NH, 10/*Querelle*, 84). Still, a testimony by Johannes de Raey, who defended several disputations under Regius in 1641 and became a leading Cartesian philosopher in the Netherlands, suggests that Regius' appointment did have a Cartesian ring. In 1661, De Raey told a visiting Danish student that Regius owed his professoriate to two of Descartes' friends.<sup>26</sup> The first friend is without any doubt Reneri. The other one is probably Gijsbert van der Hoolck, one of Descartes' most influential friends in Utrecht. Burgomaster and *curator* from 1634 till 1639 and again in 1641–1642, he was the key figure in academic affairs. Nothing would be decided upon without his consent. Moreover, during the Utrecht crisis he showed himself a supporter and protector of Regius and Descartes. If Van der Hoolck is indeed the second friend referred to by De Raey, it is likely that Regius' enthusiasm for Descartes' philosophy yielded him the Burgomaster's support.

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Socinianism and Arminianism. Only at the very last moment Regius backed down and signed the Reformed Act of Faith. Upon moving to Utrecht, he received an attestation of Orthodoxy from the Church Council of Naarden. See my *Regius Chronicle*, and DE VRIJER 1917, 9–15; DIBON 1990, 633–634. The records concerning the Classis of Amsterdam are published in DE VRIJER 1917, Appendix II.

<sup>26</sup> '[...] Regium Naerdae primum Rectorem per duos Cartesij amicos ad Ultrajectensem Professionem fuisse promotum', BORRICHIOUS 1983, I, 43. The Danish student also recorded what De Raey had to say about Regius' religious views: 'Regium fuisse diu Socinianum, jam videri esse Atheum'. After the rupture between Descartes and Regius in 1646, De Raey turned against Regius, saying 'that it is easier to attain salvation with Voetius than with Regius'. In 1687, he stated that 'before Spinoza, some of whose errors he shared, Regius corrupted philosophy' (DE RAEY 1692, 666; the translation is Verbeek's (VERBEEK 1992A, 73)).

Descartes [Santpoort] to Regius  
[between 19 and 23 August 1638]

*Vie*, II, 8 [A, B], 10 [C].

[A]

Le plaisir que lui [Descartes] donnèrent ces beaux effets de sa Philosophie ne lui permit pas de différer de répondre à ses civilités, et de lui accorder son amitié avec tous les fruits qu'elle pourrait produire.

[B] = R/D 3, II. 2–3

« [...] la lettre admirable que vous [Descartes] me fîtes l'honneur de m'écrire *au mois d'Août dernier*. »

[C]

M. Descartes ayant répondu civilement à cette lettre [R/D 1] ...

COMMENTARY

*Date*

In R/D 3 (II. 2–3) Regius refers back to Descartes' letter he received shortly after sending R/D 1: 'la lettre admirable que vous me fîtes l'honneur de m'écrire *au mois d'août dernier*'.<sup>1</sup> The actual date of the letter cannot be specified, but it is likely that Reneri who forwarded R/D 1 to Descartes, also conveyed Descartes' reply to Regius when he returned to Utrecht. The letter is therefore written between Reneri's arrival in Santpoort on August 19, and August 23, when Descartes wrote Mersenne that Reneri had visited him.<sup>2</sup>

1 The italics are Baillet's. Whenever Baillet uses italics in a quotation it does not mean it concerns an addition — these are always put between brackets — but he wants to emphasize the words that support the point he wishes to make. Baillet probably stressed the particular words in R/D 3 in support of his claim that Descartes wrote to Regius in August 1638.

2 Descartes to Huygens, 19 August 1638, ROTH 1926, 84/AT II 672; Descartes to Mersenne, 23 August 1638, AT II 330–331/CM VIII 58–59. Reneri had to be back in Utrecht on 15/25 August, the start of a new term at the university.

*Text*

The letter is not published in CLE, nor does Baillet seem to have had access to it. The biographer's only source is probably R/D 3. D/R 2 is not listed separately in AT, but Regius' reference to Descartes' letter in R/D 3 prompted Adam and Tannery to correct their initial view that Descartes did not personally reply to Regius' first letter (AT II 527, n. a). AM does not go beyond that, probably for want of anything substantial on the letter (AM III, 27, 198). In RL any reference to Descartes' first letter to Regius is absent.

Bordoli (B, 74) is the first to include D/R 2 in the correspondence, borrowing both date and text from a letter by Descartes to Reneri of 20 August 1639 (AT II 307, quoting from *Vie*, II, 8). This may seem justifiable, as Baillet explicitly states that Descartes wrote to Regius and Reneri at the same time.<sup>3</sup> However, the letter to Reneri probably never existed (see my commentary on R/D 1, *Context*, 1), and little is therefore gained by presenting Baillet's mistaken account as D/R 2.

The present edition gives all three references to D/R 2 in Baillet's *Vie*. Text B, a fragment from R/D 3, is the most reliable proof of its existence, and, as I remarked, probably Baillet's only source.

*Contents*

In response to Regius' first letter, Descartes informs him that he is glad to offer him his services. He allows Regius to accompany Reneri on his next visit (cf. R/D 3, ll. 11–16), and without a doubt wishes Regius success in his new position as professor at the University of Utrecht.

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<sup>3</sup> In continuation of D/R 2A, Baillet writes 'Il récrivit en même temps à M. Reneri ...' (*Vie*, II, 8).

## Regius to Descartes [Santpoort]

[early February 1639]

*Vie*, II, 8–9 (no. [2]).  
 AT, II, 527 (no. 158).

« Je n'ai point de termes [...] pour exprimer la joie que m'a donnée la lettre admirable que vous me fîtes l'honneur de m'écrire *au mois d'Août dernier*.<sup>1</sup> Elle a tellement augmenté le peu de réputation dont j'étais redevable d'ailleurs et à vous et à M. Reneri, qu'elle a attiré à mon  
 5 école | non seulement plusieurs étudiants en médecine, mais même des philosophes, des jurisconsultes, des théologiens et d'autres auditeurs étrangers, pour écouter les leçons publiques et particulières que je fais de la médecine suivant les principes de votre philosophie, que j'ai puisés dans vos excellents ouvrages, ou appris de la bouche de M. Reneri.<sup>2</sup> ...  
 10 Cela pouvait suffire, ce semble, pour me rehausser le courage, et pour me faciliter de plus en plus les voies de la nature.<sup>3</sup> Cependant votre bonté vous fait faire encore bien d'autres démarches en ma faveur, et au lieu que vous m'aviez accordé la grâce de vouloir bien me souffrir à la compagnie de M. Reneri toutes les fois qu'il vous rendrait visite, vous  
 15 me permettez maintenant de vous aller voir seul à cause de ses fréquentes indispositions.<sup>4</sup> J'espère profiter de ma permission dans cette semaine qui finira nos vacances; et si je ne vous suis point à charge, je passerai deux ou trois jours près de vous, afin de pouvoir vous consulter sur divers desseins que je me suis proposés, etc. »

1 For the italicised phrase, see my commentary on D/R 2, n. 1. R/D 3 and R/D 58 are the only letters which Baillet quotes verbally. Note that both texts are translations from the original Latin.

2 Cf. R/D 1A, ll. 6–15 and R/D 1B, ll. 12–15.

3 'Les voies de la nature', a Baconian expression (*viae naturae*), cf. *Novum organum*, in: BACON 1963, I, 231, 282.

4 This remark may indicate another (lost) letter to Regius, but perhaps Regius obtained permission to visit Descartes via Reneri or another of Descartes' friends in Utrecht. See my commentary.

## COMMENTARY

*Date*

Although Baillet gives 9 March 1639 as the date of the letter — without indication of the calendar used — the letter itself contains information that contradicts Baillet.<sup>5</sup> Regius announces his intention to visit Descartes ‘dans cette semaine qui finira nos vacances’ (ll. 16–17). According to Baillet (*Vie*, II, 10, 19), the university was closed in March due to an annual fair, but there is no evidence for a fair in March, nor for an academic holiday during that month.<sup>6</sup> There is in fact proof that the university was not closed in the period in which Regius’ letter is supposed to be written. On 23 February, 9 March, and 12 March 1639 OS Voetius presided over several disputations.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, the date given by Baillet cannot be correct.<sup>8</sup>

In his letter Regius mentions Reneri’s poor health (ll. 14–16) and the letter thus antedates Reneri’s death on 10/20 March 1639 (cf. R/D 4). As a result, two holidays may be meant in the phrase ‘cette semaine qui finira nos vacances’: autumn half-term holiday or the winter-vacation. The holiday referred to has to be the latter, because it is implied that it lasted longer than one week. The correct date of the letter is therefore c.24 January/3 February 1639.

Baillet does not indicate the number of R/D 3 in the Clerselier collection, but it was probably no. 2. In between the present letter and no. 3 in the Clerselier collection (R/D 6), Baillet mentions another letter (R/D 4), but this particular letter appears not to have been part of the collection (see my commentary on R/D 4).

*Context*

The main topic of the present letter is Regius’ desire to visit Descartes, which apparently he had not done yet. In August 1638, Descartes allowed Regius to accompany Reneri on his next visit (D/R 2). Reneri being a regular guest of Descartes, the promise will have satisfied Regius for the moment. After several months it became clear to Regius that Reneri would not visit Descartes in the near future, and finally he asked Descartes’ permission to come to Santpoort without Reneri. This was granted by Descartes, probably in January 1639, and the present letter is Regius’ reply.

This course of events can be inferred from Regius’ letter itself: ‘au lieu que vous m’aviez accordé la grâce de vouloir bien me souffrir à la compagnie de M. Reneri, toutes les fois qu’il vous rendrait visite, vous me permettez *maintenant* de vous aller voir seul à cause de ses fréquentes indispositions’ (ll. 12–16, emphasis added). The word ‘maintenant’ implies that Descartes recently gave Regius permission to come to

5 ‘Sa lettre est datée du IX de Mars 1639 et ne pouvant y renvoyer le Lecteur, parce qu’elle n’est pas encore publique, il est à propos de lui en représenter le sens en abrégé pour des raisons dont ont lui laissera ensuite l’examen’, *Vie*, II, 8, immediately followed by the text of R/D 3.

6 See the introductory note on Utrecht University.

7 VOETIUS 1648–1669, I, 442; 489; II, 698. In 1638 and 1640, Voetius held several disputations in late February and early March as well (3, 10 and 17 March 1638 OS, and 29 February, 2, 7 and 14 March 1640 OS; VOETIUS 1648–69, I, 933, II, 902, 922, 943, III, 1227). For a chronological list of the disputations published in VOETIUS 1648–1669, see VAN ASSELT/DEKKER 1995, 193.

8 There is no explanation of Baillet’s mistake, especially because he had the autograph at hand.

R/D 3

[early February 1639]

Santpoort on his own, as opposed to Descartes' permission in August 1638 to visit him in the company of Reneri. It is not possible to determine whether this permission was granted by a letter now lost, although Regius' specification that Descartes' first letter was written in 'August last year' (ll. 2–3) could be an indication to that effect.

## Regius to Descartes [Santpoort]

19/29 March 1639

*Vie*, II, 20, 21.  
AT, II, 528 (no. 159–I).

On lui [Reneri] fit dans la grande église de la ville de splendides funérailles, auxquelles le Sénat ou les Magistrats assistèrent en corps avec l'Université environnée d'une grande multitude de peuple.<sup>1</sup> Le lendemain [*i.m.*: le 18 jour de Mars.] l'on se rassembla pour entendre l'oraison funèbre du défunt. Elle fut prononcée  
 5 au nom de l'Université par le sieur Antoine Emilius, Professeur en éloquence et en histoire. On admira la beauté du discours, et on fut touché des réflexions de l'orateur. Mais on s'aperçut bientôt que ce n'était pas moins le panégyrique de  
 M. Descartes vivant, que l'oraison funèbre de feu M. Reneri.<sup>2</sup> [...] <sup>3</sup> | Tout cela se  
 passa sans la participation de M. Descartes, qui n'apprit la mort de M. Reneri que  
 10 par une lettre que M. Regius lui en écrivit le lendemain.<sup>4</sup>

## COMMENTARY

*Date*

According to Baillet, Regius wrote to Descartes the day after the funeral oration for Reneri, which took place on 18/28 March 1639. The date of the letter is therefore 19/29 March 1639.

Baillet does not specify the place of the letter in the Clerselier collection, and perhaps it was not part of it. If so, the letter may have been lost in the mail and never reached Descartes. Such was in any case Regius' conclusion, because he did not receive an answer from Descartes. On 17 May 1639, he therefore wrote another letter, in which he partly repeated the contents of his previous letter (see R/D 6).

1 Early March 1639, Reneri fell dangerously ill and his physicians did not expect him to recover anymore (VAN BUCHELL 1940, 86). The general assumption in secondary literature that Reneri died on 15 or 16 March OS, since he was buried on 17 March OS, appears to be incorrect. In the archives of the Domchapter (GAU) it is recorded that the death bell rang for Reneri on 10/20 March 1639 (cf. DRAKENBORCH 1895, 146). Hesitantly, Baillet reports that Reneri died during his wedding night (*Vie*, II, 19, relying on an editor's note to a letter of Pierre Gassendi (1592–1655) to Reneri, in: GASSENDI 1658, VI, 31, also cited in AT II 529; the editor mentions Henricus Bornius (see R/D 55B) as his source). The story is evidently false, as already noted in BURMAN 1738, 303, and ROTH 1926, 125. Reneri married his second wife Anna van Velthuysen in Utrecht on 21 October 1638 OS (NNBW, II, 1191).

2 ÆMILIUS 1639. Reprinted in ÆMILIUS 1651, 105–124, 412–413.

3 The passage not printed here constitutes R/D 11A.

4 Descartes already knew Reneri had died. As soon as he heard of Reneri's critical condition, he sped off to Utrecht, only to find out he could not assist him anymore (Descartes to Pollot, 6 May 1639, AT II 545). Baillet does not point out that Regius had been ordained full professor on 18/28 March 1639 (*Resolutiën*, 132), an indication that the biographer did not have the actual letter at hand, as Regius would certainly have mentioned it (see my commentary).

## Æmilius to Descartes [Santpoort]

[late March or early April 1639]

*Vie*, II, 21–22 (no. 9).

AT, III, 2–3 (no. 181–I), II, 528 (no. 159–II).

Il y avait longtemps que M. Emilius cherchait à s'introduire dans la connaissance et la familiarité de M. Descartes. Les habitudes qu'il avait eues autrefois avec M. Beeckman, Principal du Collège de Dort [*i.m.*: Lettr. MS. d'Emil. à Descart. n. IX parmi celles de Regius.], lui avaient découvert une partie de son mérite, et cet homme lui avait inspiré une vénération profonde pour lui.<sup>1</sup> Depuis la mort de M. Beeckman, s'étant lié très étroitement avec M. Reneri, qu'il considérait non seulement comme son collègue, mais encore comme son compatriote à cause du pays de Liège qui leur avait donné la naissance,<sup>2</sup> il sentit augmenter extraordinairement la passion qu'il avait conçue à Dort<sup>3</sup> pour son esprit. La seule conversation de M. Reneri l'avait rendu sectateur de ses opinions et serviteur de sa personne, jusqu'à ce que la lecture des ouvrages même de M. Descartes achevât de faire cette conquête pour la secte de la nouvelle Philosophie. A la mort de cet intime ami, il s'était trouvé d'autant plus honoré de la commission qu'il avait reçue d'en faire l'oraison funèbre [*i.m.*: V. les Lettr. de Reg.<sup>4</sup> et d'Emil. à Descart.] qu'on avait mieux secondé son inclination sans qu'il eût été obligé de la faire paraître, et sans se rendre par conséquent suspect de flatterie. Mais il bénit surtout la Providence, lorsque le premier Magistrat de la ville lui envoya ordre exprès de faire *les éloges de M. Descartes et de la nouvelle philosophie* dans l'oraison funèbre de M. Reneri.<sup>5</sup> [*I.m.*: Les termes de *l'unique Archimède de notre siècle, de l'unique Atlas de l'univers, de confident de la nature, de puissant Hercule, d'Ulysse, et*

1 Isaac Beeckman (1588–1637) was a close friend of Æmilius'. They studied together in Leiden (1607–1610) and Saumur (1612). In 1619, Æmilius was appointed rector of the Hieronymus school in Utrecht, where he took on Beeckman as deputy headmaster. After barely two years, Beeckman took up a position at the Latin School at Rotterdam. From 1627 till his death, Beeckman was rector of the Latin School at Dordrecht. NNBW, VII, 84–88. VAN BERKEL 1983. For Descartes and Beeckman, see VAN BERKEL 1983, 292–301 and GAUKROGER 1995, 68–103, 222–224.

2 The towns of Huy (Hoei), where Reneri was born, and Hasselt, Æmilius' birthplace, were part of the prince-bishopric of Liège.

3 Probably during Æmilius' visits to Dordrecht when Beeckman was rector of the Latin School, although we cannot exclude the possibility that Æmilius actually refers back to the time he himself was rector of the same school at Dordrecht from 1615 till November 1619. In the latter case, Beeckman would have told Æmilius of Descartes shortly after he made his acquaintance in November–December 1618.

4 Probably letters 8 and 10 in the Clerselier collection. Cf. R/D 11A and 11C.

5 There is probably some exaggeration in the rumour that the first Burgomaster Van der Hoolck commissioned the tribute to Descartes, but it is equally unlikely that Æmilius prepared the eulogy without his approval.



*de Dedale*, et plusieurs autres expressions figurées, dont il s'est servi dans son latin, ne lui sont venues qu'au défaut de ce qu'il voulait dire.] Ce qu'il considéra comme une faveur du Ciel, qu'il n'aurait jamais osé espérer quand il aurait eu la pensée de la solliciter. Il n'abusa point d'une occasion si favorable que Dieu lui  
 25 présentait pour se produire à M. Descartes, dont on peut dire qu'il mérita l'amitié en s'acquittant simplement d'une obligation qui lui était devenue indispensable par la nécessité d'obéir à ses maîtres légitimes. Aussi n'eut-il pas plutôt prononcé l'oraison funèbre que, non content de lui en faire donner avis par M. Regius, il lui  
 30 en envoya une copie manuscrite, avec des lettres pleines de respect et d'estime, sous prétexte que ce discours le regardant personnellement, et qu'ayant reçu ordre du Magistrat de le donner à l'imprimeur de l'Université pour le rendre public, il était à propos qu'il vît ce qu'il y avait à changer avant l'impression.<sup>6</sup>

## COMMENTARY

*Date*

The Clerselier collection of Regius' letters includes one letter to Descartes from Antonius Æmiliius, the professor of history and rhetoric in Utrecht. The funeral oration for Reneri offered Æmiliius a chance to get in touch with 'the one and only Archimedes of our age'. He sent Descartes a manuscript copy of the oration and a letter in which he introduced himself. As Æmiliius wrote to Descartes shortly after the funeral oration (ll. 27–30), which took place on 18/28 March 1639, the letter dates from late March or early April 1639.

*Text*

In the second volume of his *Vie* Baillet refers three times to Æmiliius' letter, on pages 21 and 22 (ÆM/D 5) and page 57 (see R/D 7C). But Baillet does not give the date of the letter, which suggests he did not know its exact date. He only states the letter was sent shortly after the funeral oration. The letter has the number 9 in the Clerselier collection, between Regius' letters 8 and 10 (R/D 7), which Baillet claims to be written in early 1640. The multiple references to Æmiliius' letter and the ambiguity concerning its date induced Adam and Tannery to assume that Baillet had two different letters by Æmiliius. Adam and Tannery thus list two letters from Æmiliius to Descartes, which are both taken

<sup>6</sup> In his *Lettre apologétique*, Descartes relates that next to the manuscript copy of Æmiliius' oration and its covering letter he also received a laudatory poem on him and Reneri (AT VIII B 203–204). When Æmiliius asked the poem back to have it printed, Descartes politely refused, considering the displayed admiration out of proportion. Descartes was indeed not too pleased with Æmiliius' public and extravagant praise (see my commentary), but he did consider him a personal friend ever since, even to the extent that he allowed him to read an early version of his *Meditationes* (cf. R/D 12C, R/D 14C and D/R 15). ÆM/D 5 is, however, the only 'extant' letter of their correspondence.

together with a letter from Regius. In AT, *ÆM/D* 5 is split into two parts, combining ‘Aussi n’eut-il pas ... l’impression’ (ll. 27–33) with R/D 4, and ‘Il y avoit longtemps ... solliciter’ (ll. 1–24) together with the reference to *Æmilius*’ letter in *Vie*, II, 57 with R/D 7.<sup>7</sup>

The difficulties concerning *Æmilius*’ correspondence are less problematic than Adam and Tannery believe and certainly do not warrant the assumption of there being two letters. First, it is not unusual for Baillet to refer several times to the same letter, without repeating its date and/or number. In the case of *Æmilius*’ letter, the biographer confines himself to supplying a precise reference to the letter a first time only, namely that it is no. 9 in the collection. Second, as regards the place of the letter in the collection between Regius’ letters 8 and 10, a plausible explanation is that they are grouped together because the precise date of all three letters is unknown (see my commentary on R/D 11), and because their common subject is *Æmilius*’ funeral oration. Finally, the decisive factor that we are not dealing with two different letters is that the text itself offers no indication to that effect. On the contrary, when viewed as a whole, including the bridging passage left out in AT (‘Il n’abusa point ... légitimes’, ll. 24–27), there can be little doubt that Baillet is discussing one and the same letter. The topics raised in the first part of the text are more at home in an introductory letter, as Baillet remarks, than in an advanced correspondence, as would be the consequence of the division in AT.

### *Context*

#### *Æmilius’ funeral oration for Reneri*

Baillet aptly characterises *Æmilius*’ speech as a panegyric of Descartes rather than a funeral oration for Reneri (R/D 4, ll. 7–8). Indeed, to *Æmilius* Reneri’s most memorable quality seems to have been his friendship with a French nobleman, ‘the Archimedes of our time, René Descartes’. On the pretext of *Amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas*,<sup>8</sup> *Æmilius* defends academic freedom: if one sticks to the mere explanation of traditional philosophy, the philosopher will never leave the schoolroom, and forget his proper task, which is the search for truth. *Æmilius* relates how Reneri wholeheartedly subscribed to the philosopher’s creed, in his philosophical investigations preferring his inspiring guide Descartes over the ancients. Now Descartes is staged, the oration turns into his extravagant praise: ‘you, mighty Atlas, who supports the heavenly firmament, not with raised shoulders, but by the firm reasoning of your magnificent mind’.<sup>9</sup> In a long passage, Reneri is presented speaking from heaven to Descartes, informing him that in his blessed state he now shares in Descartes’ wisdom.

To Reneri’s personal friends and his students, the tenor of the oration cannot have come as a surprise. Schoock for example, who graduated under Reneri, introduced Descartes to the readers of his anti-Cartesian work recounting how Reneri used to talk

<sup>7</sup> Respectively Regius and *Æmilius* to Descartes, ‘19 March 1639’, AT II 528–529; Regius and *Æmilius* to Descartes, ‘January 1640’, AT III 1–4.

<sup>8</sup> Aristotle, *Ethica*, I, 6, 1096a, 16. *ÆMILIUS* 1651, 113.

<sup>9</sup> ‘... magne Atlas, Cartesi, qui unus fere universum nunc fulcis coelum, non suppositis humeris, sed solidis divini animi rationibus’, *ÆMILIUS* 1651, 119.

about a certain French nobleman, who had developed this wonderful new scientific method and whom Reneri therefore called ‘Prince of philosophers’.<sup>10</sup> The majority of the audience, however, probably had never heard of Descartes before. The comments on Æmilius’ oration by the professor of law Antonius Matthaëus, clearly not a close friend of Reneri’s, reflect the general puzzlement:

Dr. Matthaëus said about the funeral oration for Reneri by Antonius Æmilius, that it indeed mentioned his virtues, but kept silent about his vices, and, moreover, it too highly valued a certain Frenchman Du Chartres [sic], a very ingenious man, who is in the habit of attributing everything to himself while despising others.<sup>11</sup>

Descartes himself was not too pleased with the attention he received, fearing that it would arouse the wrong kind of attention. Indeed, according to Descartes, it was Æmilius’ oration which prompted Voetius to accuse him of atheism in his disputations later that year. Descartes admits he is not specifically named in the writings of the Utrecht theologian, but ‘[Voetius] y a meslé, parmy les marques de l’atheisme, toutes les choses qu’il sçavoit m’estre attribuées par le bruit commun’.<sup>12</sup> Descartes seems not to have exaggerated. In 1640, Voetius wrote to Mersenne, whom he admired for his work against atheism, imploring his help against Descartes. According to Voetius, some worship Descartes as if he were a new God descended from heaven.<sup>13</sup> Without any doubt, Æmilius’ performance greatly contributed to Voetius’ unfavorable impression of Cartesianism.

<sup>10</sup> SCHOOCK 1643, [I–IV]/*Querelle*, 157–158.

<sup>11</sup> The Utrecht historian Arnold van Buchell, or Buchelius (1565–1641), wrote Matthaëus’ comments down in his notebook: ‘Dicebat Doctor Matheus de orat(ione) fun(ebri), in Mortem D(omini) Renerij habita ab Ant(onio) Æmylio, quod virtutes in eo quidem enarrasset, vitia t(ame)n dissimulasset, tum q(uo)d nimis aestimasset quendam Gallum du Chartres, nimiae subtilitatis virum, qui sibi o(mn)ia tribuere solet cum deprecatione aliorum’, *Notae Quotidianae*, Utrecht University Library, 5 L 25, p. 100 (with some transcription errors published in VAN BUCHELL 1940, 70). For some reason, the entry in his *Notae* is placed between remarks dated July 1638.

<sup>12</sup> *Lettre apologétique aux magistrats d’Utrecht*, AT VIII B 205. Voetius’ disputations *De atheismo* (VOETIUS 1639) were defended on 22 and 29 June, 6 and 13 July 1639 OS. A revised edition of VOETIUS 1639 appeared in VOETIUS 1648–69, I, 114–225, including many explicit references to Descartes. The original disputations have been unearthed by Verbeek, see VERBEEK 1993E.

<sup>13</sup> ‘Molitur ille vir [Descartes], sed sero nimis, ut opinor, sectam novam, nunquam antehac in rerum natura visam, aut auditam; et sunt qui illum admirantur atque adorant, tamquam novum Deum de coelo lapsum’, Voetius to Mersenne, 27 August 1640 OS, AT VIII B 205–206/CM X 166. For the date of the letter, which is not found in AT or CM, see BOS 1999B, 421.

## Regius to Descartes [Santpoort]

17 May 1639

*Vie*, II, 21 [A], 23 [B], 35 [C], 51–52 [D] (no. 3).  
 AT, II, 548 [A], 548–549 [B] (no. 164).

[A] (In continuation of R/D 4)

Il parut même qu'il [Descartes] n'en reçut la nouvelle<sup>1</sup> que plusieurs jours après, lorsque M. Regius, s'étant douté que sa lettre d'avis<sup>2</sup> avait été perdue, lui récrivit le XVII de Mai 1639.<sup>3</sup> [*I.m.*: Lettr. 3 MS. de Regius à Descartes.] Il lui manda de nouveau une partie de ce qui le regardait dans l'oraison de M. Emilius. Il lui demanda en même temps la permission de l'aller voir à Egmond aux Fêtes de la Pentecôte pour l'informer de ce qui s'était passé, et pour se faire instruire de diverses choses dont il avait besoin.<sup>4</sup> Enfin il le conjura de vouloir lui donner auprès de lui la place de feu M. Reneri, ajoutant que, s'il la lui accordait, *il s'estimerait aussi heureux que s'il était élevé jusqu'au troisième Ciel*.<sup>5</sup>

[B]

Après s'être assuré des bontés de M. Descartes, il continua le dessein qu'il avait entrepris de renfermer dans des propositions courtes tout ce qu'il croyait savoir touchant la physiologie. Il était presque sur la fin de cet ouvrage, lorsqu'il en écrivit à M. Descartes [*i.m.*: Le 17 Mai 1639.] pour lui communiquer les difficultés qu'il y trouvait; ayant pris un chemin qui lui paraissait nouveau, et qui pouvait être dangereux à un homme qui n'était pas encore assez expérimenté dans les voies de la nature.<sup>6</sup> Il le pria par avance [*i.m.*: Lettr. 3 de Reg. à Desc.] de prendre la peine de le revoir quand il l'aurait achevé, et d'user de son droit en y réformant tout ce qu'il jugerait avoir besoin de réforme.<sup>7</sup>

1 *Sc.* Reneri's death on 10/20 March 1639.

2 R/D 4.

3 Cf. R/D 4, n. 4.

4 Pentecost fell on 2/12 June 1639, so the Whitsun holiday lasted from 30 May/9 June till 6/16 June. In 1639, Descartes did not live in Egmond, as Baillet believes, but in Santpoort. See my introductory note on *Descartes' whereabouts 1635–1650*.

5 'Scio hominem [...] raptum eiusmodi usque ad tertium caelum', 2 Cor. 12.2 (Vulgate).

6 For the expression *viae naturae*, see R/D 3, n. 3.

7 See my commentary on R/D 12. For Descartes' comment, see D/R 17.

[C]

Monsieur *Vander-Hoolck* l'un des principaux Magistrats de la ville, avec qui M. Descartes avait de grandes habitudes, et qui protégeait M. Regius pour l'amour de lui dans les relations que l'Université pouvait avoir avec le Sénat ou le Conseil de la ville.<sup>8</sup> [*I.m.*: Lettr. 3 MS. de Regius à Desc.]

[D]

Il s'agissait d'une gageure fameuse de mathématiques entre deux Hollandais, dont l'un était *Jean Stampioen*, et l'autre *Jacques Waessenaer* le jeune, dont le père était Professeur des mathématiques à Utrecht, et ami intime de M. Descartes.<sup>9</sup> [*I.m.*: Lettr. 3 de Reg. MS.] Stampioen qui était aussi fils d'un mathématicien à Amsterdam,<sup>10</sup> avait publié dès l'an 1639 un assez gros livre d'algèbre en langue vulgaire du pays, après avoir fatigué le public pendant plusieurs années par de magnifiques promesses, et par des fanfaronnades qui n'avaient produit jusque-là que des affiches, des programmes, et des placards pleins de vanités extravagantes, pour préparer le monde à recevoir son grand ouvrage d'algèbre avec le respect et l'estime qu'il en attendait.<sup>11</sup>

[...]

Waessenaer était sommé par ces billets de maintenir et démontrer ce qu'il avait écrit contre Stampioen; mais il ne crut pas devoir s'engager à rien avant que de consulter M. Descartes, dont il suivait la méthode et l'analyse géométrique, comme nous l'apprenons de Regius et de Lipstorp. [*I.m.*: Reg. ut supr. [Lettr. 3] et Epist. 6. Listorp. de certitud. Phil. Cart. p. 12 et 13.]

<sup>8</sup> In *Vie*, text C is part of an enumeration of Descartes' friends in Utrecht. It is not possible to determine why Regius mentioned Van der Hoolck in his letter. If Regius indeed assumed that his previous letter (R/D 4) did not reach Descartes, he will without any doubt have reiterated the decision of the Vroedschap (city council) from 18/28 March 1639 appointing him ordinary professor, and in this context he may have mentioned Van der Hoolck (*Resolutiën*, 132). Contrary to Adam and Tannery's note to R/D 6, on 22 April 1639 OS Regius was not entrusted with lecturing on physics but with instructing the students in the hortus botanicus (WIJNNE 1888, 45; *Resolutiën*, 132). Regius obtained permission to give a course in physics in April 1640 (see my commentary on D/R 12).

<sup>9</sup> For Jacob van Waessenaer and Johan Stampioen the Younger, see the *Biographical Lexicon*.

<sup>10</sup> Jan Jansz. Stampioen, mathematician living in Rotterdam (not Amsterdam). He was appointed land surveyor of the States of Holland in 1621, which office he combined, from 1624 onwards, with that of inspector of weights and measures of Rotterdam. He published a tract on the measurement of latitude, *Nieuwe tafelen der polus-hooghte* (Rotterdam: M. Bastiaensz., 1618). NNBW, II, 1356–1358.

<sup>11</sup> The work referred to is Johan Stampioen's *Algebra ofte Nieuwe stel-regel, Waer door alles ghevonden wordt inde Wis-Konst, wat vindtbaer is*, printed at the author's house, *In sphaera mundi*, The Hague, 1639. The privilege is dated 25 March 1639. The so-called Stampioen-affair is outlined in my commentary.

## COMMENTARY

*Date*

Baillet gives the date of the letter, 17 May 1639, without indication of the calendar used.

*Text*

Texts C and D are not in AT, but as Baillet refers to R/D 6 in the margin of both texts, they are part of the correspondence.

*Context**The Stampioen-affair*

In the spring of 1639, Johan Stampioen the Younger published his *Algebra ofte Nieuwe stel-regel* after an intensive publicity campaign.<sup>12</sup> From the outset, Descartes followed Stampioen's moves Argus-eyed, as the proposed *Algebra* was evidently directed against his own *Géométrie*. In 1638, Stampioen published a broadsheet, in which he challenged Dutch mathematicians to solve two mathematical problems. The challenge was taken up by Descartes' friend in Utrecht, Jacobus van Waessenaer, who solved both questions using Descartes' geometrical method. Stampioen nevertheless pursued the publication of his *Algebra*, which immediately provoked an answer by Van Waessenaer with the aid of Descartes.<sup>13</sup> In three 'letters of summon' (*Daghvaerdbrieven*) Stampioen challenged his opponent to demonstrate his criticism for a forfeit of 600 guilders, which would benefit the poor should a jury decide that his method was inferior. Van Waessenaer accepted and both parties consigned the wagers to the rector of Leiden University, Nicolas Dedel (1597–1646) in November 1639. In the weeks that followed, anxious discussion took place on the exact formulation of the question at stake. As members of the jury were appointed the Leiden mathematicians Jacob Golius and Frans van Schooten Sr, who were both on friendly terms with Descartes.<sup>14</sup> The original plan was for the jury to consist of four members, but Bernardus Schotanus, professor of law and mathematics in Utrecht, became seriously ill, and Andries van Berlicom (c.1587–1656),<sup>15</sup> secretary of the city of Rotterdam, declined for reasons unknown. Golius and Van Schooten proceeded slowly, much to the annoyance of Descartes. Finally, on 24 May 1640, the jury declared Van Waessenaer the winner, and Stampioen lost his money to the Leiden *Pesthuis* (see D/R 13, ll. 73–79). Triumphantly, Descartes and Van Waessenaer published later that year a dossier on the affair in 'The Ignorance of the Mathematician Stampioen exposed'.<sup>16</sup>

12 STAMPIOEN 1639. During the affair, which lasted from 1638 till 1640, Stampioen and Van Waessenaer showered each other with pamphlets. The abundance of material makes the affair a complex one and a comprehensive study is still desired. Attempts to unravel the affair are BIERENS DE HAAN 1887, and BOSMANS 1927, making use of the publication of numerous letters and documents on the affair by Roth (ROTH 1926, 98–128, 264–289/AT II 686–726, III 737–744). See also AM, III, 152–154, THUISSEN-SCHOUTE 1954, 74–79.

13 VAN WAESSENAER 1639.

14 For Golius, see the *Biographical Lexicon*. For Van Schooten Sr (c.1581–1645), see NNBW, VII, 1108–1110, and THUISSEN-SCHOUTE 1954, 77, 79, 83, 648.

15 NNBW, I, 317–318; VI, 105.

16 VAN WAESSENAER 1640. Descartes' involvement in the publication emerges from his correspondence with

## Regius to Descartes [Santpoort]

14 [/24] July 1639

*Vie*, II, 34–35 (no. 4).  
 AT, II, 569 (no. 169).

Les exercices finirent peu de jours après cette thèse; et M. Regius écrivant à M. Descartes le quatorzième de Juillet [*i.m.*: Lettre 4 MS. de Reg. à Desc.] qui commençait les vacances, se garda bien de lui mander ce qu'il avait fait à la thèse.<sup>1</sup> Il se contenta de lui faire savoir « qu'il avait achevé son cours public de médecine cette année; qu'il était toujours demeuré fortement attaché à ses principes et à sa méthode; et qu'il souhaitait avec passion de conférer avec lui sur la meilleure manière de faire un nouveau cours l'année suivante, qui commençait après la foire du mois d'Août, selon le règlement de l'Université. »<sup>2</sup>

10 M. Descartes lui avait fait espérer de l'aller voir en un | voyage qu'il semblait 35  
 avoir promis de faire à Utrecht au temps de la foire.<sup>3</sup>

## COMMENTARY

*Date*

Baillet gives the date of the letter, 14 July 1639, without indication of the calendar used. He does, however, specify that July 14 marked the beginning of the academic summer holiday. Officially the summer recess started on Monday 15/25 July, and the exact date of the letter is therefore 14 [/24] July.

*Text*

Before turning to R/D 7, Baillet informs his readers of Regius' presumed misbehaviour during a disputation submitted in July 1639 (*Vie*, II, 34). Contrary to Adam and Tannery, I do not incorporate his account in the selection for R/D 7 from *Vie*, because, as Baillet

4–5 « qu'il avait ... année; qu'il était] qu'il avait ... année; « qu'il était *Vie*.

Huygens and De Wilhem, see ROTH 1926, 137/AT III 753, ROTH 1926, 138/AT III 754, AT III 199–200.

1 Baillet refers to Regius' alleged misbehaviour during the disputation *pro gradu* of Florentius Schuyf in July 1639. See my commentary.

2 In 1635, the Utrecht Vroedschap decided that the academic summer recess would last from 15/25 July till 15/25 August. See my introductory note on Utrecht University.

3 Apparently, Descartes did not visit Regius during the summer of 1639, because Baillet relates that by September Regius had still not been able to consult him (R/D 8, II. 1–2).

stipulates, Regius does not mention the event in his letter (cf. II. 1–3). Baillet’s account has, moreover, no surplus value above NH, his only source. On the contrary, the biographer gives the event a turn not found in NH, and which is consequently his own interpretation (see below).

### Context

#### *Florentius Schuyt’s disputation pro gradu*

According to NH, the first signs of the pending crisis over the New Philosophy at Utrecht University, surfaced in July 1639 when Florentius Schuyt<sup>4</sup> submitted his disputation *pro gradu*.<sup>5</sup> Apparently, the subject of the disputation was the magnet, the attraction of which Schuyt, having the Aristotelian philosopher Senguerd as his *promotor*, explained in a traditional fashion. NH relates how the graduation ended tumultuously, when an opponent trained in the New Philosophy attacked Schuyt on the magnet’s occult quality of attraction and Regius subsequently rose from his chair proclaiming victory for the opponent — probably one of his own students. Regius thus seriously insulted both Schuyt and Senguerd, and went against the judgement of all professors present that Schuyt had well defended himself against the objections.<sup>6</sup>

As Baillet carefully reminds his readers, the account as presented in NH is a Voetian picture of the event.<sup>7</sup> In the context of NH it serves as an example of the unrest Cartesianism evoked at the university and its disturbing attraction on students. The account even pinpoints Regius’ offensive propagation of the New Philosophy. What actually happened, and how serious Regius’ ‘misbehaviour’ was cannot be determined, NH being the only source of the event. Regius may just have protested to Senguerd,

4 After his graduation in the Utrecht Faculty of Arts, Florentius Schuyt (1619–1669) studied philosophy and theology in Leiden for a short while, before being appointed professor of philosophy at the Illustrious School at ‘s-Hertogenbosch in 1640. In the 1640s, Schuyt embraced Cartesianism. Eventually he became interested in the philosopher’s posthumous works, and in 1662 he published Descartes’ *Traité de l’homme* in a Latin translation. Although Clerselier claims that his own edition of *Traité de l’homme* in 1664 is based on the French autograph, Schuyt’s re-edition of 1664 is of special interest because it is based on a collation of four different manuscripts. In 1664, Schuyt graduated in medicine and he was immediately appointed professor of medicine in Leiden. THUISSEN-SCHOUTE 1954, 261–262. SASSEN 1963, 21–36. SASSEN 1970, 79–83. LINDEBOOM 1974. LINDEBOOM 1984, 1791–1794.

5 According to NH, Schuyt’s graduation took place on 9/19 July, whereas the entry in *Album Prom. Acad. Rhen.-Traj.* reads 3/13 July. The manuscript of NH does not mention the date of Schuyt’s disputation. The date in the *Album* is the more likely, as it concerns a Wednesday, one of the two weekdays on which disputations were normally submitted (see my introductory note on Utrecht University), whereas 9/19 July is a Tuesday. No copy of Schuyt’s disputation is known to exist. LINDEBOOM 1984, 1791 mistakenly points to the disputation *Positiones politicae et oeconomicas* (Utrecht: Æg. Roman, 1639) as Schuyt’s inaugural theses; Schuyt defended this particular disputation on 25 May 1639 OS, the *praeses* being Senguerd.

6 ‘Quae hactenus semina contentionum sub glebis delituisse videbantur, primum erumpere coeperunt, occasione disputationis D. Florentii Schuilii, pro obtinendo Philosophiae magisterio publice institutae 9 Jul. anno 1639, ubi cum Opponents, secundum sententiam novae Philosophiae, omnes qualitates attractrices et qualitatem occultam magnetis oppugnaret, Medicus [sc. Regius] stans in subselliis D. Senguerdio, ordinario Philosophiae Professore et Promotori, satis indecore insultavit, et contra Doctiss. Candidatum, D. Senguerdii discipulum, triumphum ante victoriam cecinit; cum tamen, omnium Professorum iudicio, Candidatus perquam solide et dextre omnia objecta dilueret, et non inconcinne Opponentem perstringeret, atque ad terminos revocaret’, NH, 14 (*Querelle*, 86–87).

7 ‘Cette action que nous n’avons apprise que par le canal de Voetius’, *Vie*, II, 34. The remark shows that Baillet’s only source is NH.



that the respondent had not been able to refute the arguments of the New Philosophy, which in itself would have been embarrassing enough, the disputation being *pro gradu*. In any case, since chaotic disputations were the rule rather than the exception, the event may not have been as extraordinary as NH pictures it.<sup>8</sup>

Although Baillet's only source is NH, his account of the disputation contains an element not found in NH. According to Baillet, Schuyt was not able to reply to the opponent's objections, and Senguerd assisted him in refuting the arguments of the New Philosophy himself. Senguerd's intervention would have angered Regius, claiming triumph for the opponent.<sup>9</sup> This is Baillet's own interpretation of the event, as NH does not relate Senguerd's intrusion, but explicitly states that Schuyt defended himself very well against the opponent.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> DE VRIJER 1917, 32–33.

<sup>9</sup> 'Le répondant, quoique fort bien exercé sur les cahiers de son maître, parut un peu embarrassé, mais le professeur ayant pris la parole pour le dégager, M. Regius se leva, et sans respecter ni l'assemblée ni la profession, l'interrompit, lui insulta mal à propos, et voulut adjuger à l'agresseur une victoire que l'honnêteté et la coutume l'obligeaient de laisser au répondant', *Vie*, II, 34.

<sup>10</sup> Secondary literature focuses on Baillet's account of the event and is, therefore, trivial. De Vrijer, for example, takes the view that the blame should not be Regius', but Senguerd's for coming to his student's rescue (DE VRIJER 1917, 31). Cf. DUKER 1861, 74; MONCHAMP 1886, 398; DUKER 1989, II, 142–143; DIBON 1954, 205; SASSEN 1963, 22–23; SASSEN 1970, 79; LINDEBOOM 1974, 14–17; RODIS-LEWIS 1995, 231.

## Regius to Descartes [Santpoort]

[first half of September 1639]

*Vie*, II, 35 (no. 5).  
AT, II, 582 (no. 172).

M. Regius vit passer la foire, et finir le temps de ses vacances sans avoir eu l'avantage qu'il avait espéré.<sup>1</sup> Il fallut reprendre les leçons publiques avant que de pouvoir réparer la chose par un voyage qu'il aurait souhaité de faire à Egmond.<sup>2</sup> Et comme il lui fallait au moins deux jours libres pour cette course, il ne les put  
5 trouver que vers le milieu de Septembre [*i.m.*: Lettr. 5 MS. de Reg. à Desc.], auquel sa femme ne permit pas même qu'il s'éloignât d'elle à cause d'une grossesse de huit mois et demi où elle avait besoin de lui.<sup>3</sup>

## COMMENTARY

*Date*

Regius informs Descartes that he would have liked to visit him sometime in mid-September, but his wife being eight and a half months pregnant needs the assistance of her husband. Baillet does not give the date of the letter, but the child, a son, died on 16/26 September, three days after it was born. The letter can therefore be placed in the first half of September (NS).

*Context*

In continuation of R/D 9A, Baillet reports the frequent exchange of letters between Regius and Descartes in the autumn of 1639:

Le temps de M. Descartes n'en fut pas plus épargné. Il ne fut presque occupé que de ses réponses aux consultations de M. Regius pendant les mois de Septembre et Octobre. Quelques longues, quelques fréquentes que fussent les lettres d'un disciple si zélé, il ne plaignait point pour l'instruire un temps qu'il ne croyait jamais regretter. L'importance des questions et des difficultés qu'il lui proposait, l'empêchait de rien négliger pour le mettre en état d'établir ses principes. Elles roulaient la plupart sur la nature des anges, sur celle de l'âme de l'homme, sur son union avec le corps, sur l'âme des bêtes et des plantes, sur la vie, sur le mouvement du cœur, et sur la circulation du sang.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See R/D 7.

<sup>2</sup> In 1639, Descartes lived in Santpoort and not in Egmond (see my introductory note on *Descartes' whereabouts 1635–1650*).

<sup>3</sup> On 13/23 September 1639, Regius' wife, Maria de Swart, bore a son, but the child lived for only three days (see R/D 10, n. 5). Regius had five children, but only his daughter Maria (†1657) survived infancy (DE VRIJER 1917, 16).

<sup>4</sup> *Vie*, II, 35–36.

[first half of September 1639]

R/D 8

The 'frequent exchange of letters' is without a doubt an invention of Baillet, since the only letter he mentions as being written in September and October 1639 is the present letter. All particular questions listed by Baillet are dealt with in the correspondence, but none in the letters from 1639.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> On the nature of angels: D/R 31, ll. 40–42; on the human soul: D/R 19, D/R 31, D/R 33; union of mind and body: D/R 29, D/R 31, D/R 33, D/R 45; the souls of plants and beasts: D/R 19; life: D/R 45, ll. 14–20; movement of the heart and circulation of the blood: D/R 13, D/R 21, D/R 26, D/R 27, D/R 28.

## Regius to Descartes [Santpoort]

[first half of November 1639]

*Vie*, II, 36 [A], 54–55 [B], 52 [C] (no. 6).  
 AT, II, 616–617 [A, B] (no. 176).

[A]

L'opinion de M. Descartes sur cette dernière question<sup>1</sup> l'avait mise en grand crédit parmi les savants; et elle avait merveilleusement contribué à rétablir sur ce sujet la réputation de Guillaume Harvée,<sup>2</sup> qui s'était trouvée maltraitée par les satires et le décri de divers médecins des Pays-Bas, la plupart ignorants ou entêtés des  
 5 anciennes maximes de leurs Facultés. C'est ce qui fit que le public reçût assez mal ce que deux médecins nommés Parisanus et Primerosius, firent imprimer à Leyde chez le Maire, [*i.m.*: Lettr. 6 MS de Reg. à Desc.] vers le mois de Septembre de cette année, touchant la circulation du sang, contre le sentiment de Harvée.<sup>3</sup>

[B]

Cependant il était arrivé un fâcheux contretemps au sieur Waessenaer, lorsqu'il fut question de se rendre à Leyde, où l'on avait transporté le bureau de cette affaire.<sup>4</sup> [*I.m.*: Lettre 6 de Reg. MS.] Il était tombé dangereusement malade sur la fin d'Octobre d'une fausse pleurésie, accompagnée d'une très grande difficulté de  
 5 respirer. Le mal le réduisit fort bas, et le conduisit fort avant dans le mois de Novembre. De sorte que M. Regius, qui était son médecin, se crut obligé d'en écrire à M. Descartes, et d'en informer même Messieurs de Leyde, afin qu'on ne crût pas qu'il eût pris ce prétexte pour ne pas se trouver à l'assignation donnée de sa part au sieur Stampioen, et qu'il se fût défié de la bonté de sa cause.<sup>5</sup> Il ne lui fut

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1 *Sc.* the circulation of the blood.

2 William Harvey (1578–1657) studied in Cambridge and Padua, where he graduated in medicine in 1602. He set up practice in London, and in 1618 became court physician of the English kings James I (1603–1625) and his successor Charles I (1625–1649). In 1615 he was appointed Lumlerian lecturer in anatomy and surgery. In 1628 he published his revolutionary work on the circulation of the blood, *Exercitatio de motu cordis et sanguinis in animalibus* (Frankfurt am Mainz, W. Fitzer). DNB, 25, 94–99. DSB, 3, 150–162.

3 W. Harvey, *De motu cordis et sanguinis in animalibus anatomica exercitatio. Cum refutationibus Æmilii Parisani ... et Jacobi Primirosii* (Leiden: J. Maire, 1639). Æmilius Parisanus (1567–1643; BLA, 4, 505) and James Primrose (see my commentary) both opposed Harvey's theory. The volume published by Maire contains Harvey's *De motu cordis* as well as the refutations by Parisanus (a reprint of Parisanus' *Exercitationes de subtilitate*, Venice: M.A. Brogiollus, 1635), and Primrose (a reprint of PRIMROSE 1630). Cf. KEYNES 1989, 36–37.

4 The Stampioen-affair is outlined in my commentary on R/D 6. In Leiden Van Waessenaer was expected to deposit his wager with the notary Jacob Verwey, who would entrust the money to the rector of Leiden University, Nicolas Dedel.

5 The letter to Verwey and/or Dedel appears to be lost.

10 pas aussi aisé de consoler son malade, que ce contretemps chagrinait plus | que la 55  
douleur du mal. Il n'en put venir à bout qu'en lui représentant que M. Waessenaer  
son père pourrait aller à Leyde, s'il en était besoin, pour la consignation de son  
argent, et pour y tenir toutes choses en bon état devant les juges et la partie, jusqu'à  
ce qu'il fût rétabli.<sup>6</sup>

[C] = R/D 6D, ll. 11–16

Waessenaer était sommé par ces billets de maintenir et démontrer ce qu'il avait  
écrit contre Stampioen; mais il ne crut pas devoir s'engager à rien avant que de  
consulter M. Descartes, dont il suivait la méthode et l'analyse géométrique, comme  
nous l'apprenons de Regius et de Lipstorpius. [*Im.*: Reg. ut supr. [Lettr. 3] et  
5 Epist. 6. Listorp. de certitud. Phil. Cart. p. 12 et 13.]

#### COMMENTARY

##### *Date*

Baillet does not give the date of the letter, but text B contains sufficient information to fix the date. According to Baillet, Van Waessenaer Jr fell seriously ill towards the end of October, and his affliction persisted well into November. Since he was expected in Leiden to deposit a large sum of money, Regius wrote to Descartes to explain the situation, and proposed that if necessary Van Waessenaer Sr would go instead. A notarial document confirms the receipt of the money on 14 November 1639 (ROTH 1926, 274–277). The letter consequently dates from the first half of November.

<sup>6</sup> On 14 November 1639, Verwey handed Van Waessenaer's money over to the rector of Leiden University (ROTH 1926, 274–277, original Dutch text with English translation; French translation in AT II 720–721). In a letter to Huygens, Descartes mentions that on 14 November Van Waessenaer was not present in Leiden, which suggests that his illness prevented him from attending the occasion (ROTH 1926, 101/AT II 689).

10  
Regius to Descartes [Santpoort]  
3 December 1639

*Vie*, II, 47–48 (no. [7]).  
AT, II, 624–625 (no. 178).

Mr Descartes avait quitté le séjour d’Egmond depuis quelque temps, et il s’était retiré à Harderwick peut-être dans le dessein de se dérober à ceux qui s’accoutumaient à l’importuner.<sup>1</sup> M. Regius se trouvant encore trop éloigné de lui, crut qu’étant une fois hors de sa chère solitude de Nort-Hollande, toute autre demeure lui serait  
5 assez indifférente. C’est ce qui le porta à lui en écrire au commencement du mois de Décembre, [*i.m.*: Le 3 de ce mois.] pour le conjurer de vouloir se rapprocher d’Utrecht,<sup>2</sup> tant pour son intérêt particulier qui lui faisait considérer la commodité qu’il aurait de conférer avec lui plus souvent, que pour la satisfaction de quantité d’amis qu’il avait dans la ville, et surtout de M. le Colonel Alphonse,<sup>3</sup> qui l’avait  
10 chargé de lui marquer sa passion là-dessus. Il prit cette occasion pour lui faire le récit de ce qui s’était passé à son sujet en une célèbre compagnie, où il s’était trouvé dans la ville de Leyde. Il y était allé au mois de Novembre,<sup>4</sup> après que sa femme fut relevée de ses couches qui lui avaient produit un fils qui ne vécut que trois jours, pour être présent à la réception d’un de ses parents au rang des  
15 Docteurs en droit.<sup>5</sup> Durant le festin que le nouveau docteur donna aux Professeurs et à plusieurs autres personnes, la plupart gens de lettres, le discours ne manqua pas de tomber sur M. Descartes, dont plusieurs des conviés se disaient amis. Il en fut parlé comme du plus rare génie du siècle, et | comme d’un homme extraordinaire-  
48 ment suscité pour ouvrir les voies de la véritable philosophie. Les plus ardents à publier son mérite furent M. Golius, Professeur des mathématiques et des langues orientales, et le sieur Abraham *Heidanus*, Ministre, et célèbre Prédicateur de la

1 See R/D 8, n. 2. There is no independent evidence that Descartes visited Harderwijk in November or December 1639.

2 According to Baillet (*Vie*, II, 51), Descartes accepted the invitation, and remained for some time in a ‘maison de campagne’ near Utrecht (cf. KRAMM 1874, VERBEEK 1993D, 7–8, 21–23). If Descartes did visit Utrecht, his stay was fairly short, for his letters to Huygens of 17 December 1639, 3 January and 12 March 1640 were all dispatched from Santpoort (ROTH 1926, 117, 126, 131/AT II 705, III 742, 747).

3 I.e. Alphonse Pollot; on him, see the *Biographical Lexicon*.

4 Read ‘Septembre’, see the following note.

5 On 16/26 September 1639, the death bell of the Domchurch tolled for Regius’ little son (DRAKENBORCH 1895, 149). If Baillet’s information that the child lived for only three days is correct, Regius’ unnamed son would have been born on 13/23 September. The relative Baillet refers to is a cousin of Regius, Hugo de Roy (c.1617–?), who matriculated at Leiden University on 30 October 1631 (*Album Stud. Acad. Lugd.-Bat.*, 239). He graduated in law on 29 September 1639 (DE ROY 1639; MOLHUYSEN 1913–24, II, 231), and became a lawyer in Utrecht. In 1645, he published a panegyric on the Stadholder Frederik Hendrik for his capture of Hulst (DE ROY 1645A), and a treatise on the notion of justice (DE ROY 1645B).

3 December 1639

R/D 10

ville.<sup>6</sup> [...] <sup>7</sup> Ces deux Messieurs ne se lassaient pas de faire admirer à la compagnie la grandeur de l'esprit de M. Descartes et la beauté de ses découvertes. Mais sur ce que M. Regius les interrompit, pour dire qu'il n'y avait point eu de philosophes  
25 dans toute l'Antiquité, ni dans les temps postérieurs, que M. Descartes ne surpassât infiniment, M. Heydanus lui demanda ce qu'il pensait des Pythagoriciens et de leur philosophie. A quoi M. Regius répondit que le fort de la philosophie Pythagoricienne consistait principalement dans la science des nombres, mais que,  
30 auprès de M. Descartes.

#### COMMENTARY

##### *Date*

The date of the letter, 3 December 1639, is given by Baillet. We have no indication as to the calendar used. Baillet does not mention the number of the letter in the Clerselier collection. As Adam and Tannery point out, it is probably number 7, because R/D 9 has number 6, and Regius' next letter has number 8 in the Clerselier collection (R/D 11).

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<sup>6</sup> For Golius and Heydanus, see the *Biographical Lexicon*.

<sup>7</sup> Baillet supplies the reader with an observation on Heydanus by Sorbière: 'Le sage Monsieur Heydanus, que l'escole Cartesienne revere comme son principal protecteur, et qui nonobstant une profession severe a toutes les douceurs, et tout le beau tour d'esprit que l'on peut desirer en une personne fort accomplie', SORBIÈRE 1660B, 137; BLOK 1901, 64.

11  
Regius to Descartes [Santpoort]  
[early 1640]

*Vie*, II, 20–21 [A], 36–37 [B], 57 [C]; *ExI*, I (MS 4469), 358 [D] (nos. 8, 10).  
AT, III, 1–2, 3–4 (no. 181–II, partly).

[A] (In continuation of *ÆM/D* 5)

La principale louange que M. Emilius avait à donner à l'illustre défunt [Reneri],  
était d'avoir eu assez de courage pour se défaire de l'autorité des Anciens et  
des Modernes qui l'avaient précédé, afin de rentrer dans la liberté que Dieu a  
donnée à notre raison pour se conduire dans la recherche de la vérité, qui est  
5 la seule maîtresse dont nous soyons obligés de nous rendre sectateurs. C'était  
une résolution véritablement héroïque qui ne pouvait convenir qu'à des esprits du  
premier ordre. Mais il fallait que M. Descartes, qui la lui avait inspirée, comme  
à quelques autres personnes qui s'étaient attachées à lui dès le commencement de  
sa retraite en Hollande, fut le directeur de cette entreprise. [*I.m.*: Pag. 114 et suiv.  
10 des orais. d'Emil.<sup>1</sup>] M. Emilius fit valoir avec beaucoup d'éloquence les grands  
progrès que M. Reneri avait faits dans la connaissance de la nature sous un chef  
de cette qualité. Il rehaussa de couleurs fort vives l'honneur et l'avantage que  
la ville et l'Université avaient reçus de la disposition où s'était trouvé M. Reneri  
de pouvoir y enseigner les principes de la véritable philosophie, qu'il prétendait  
15 être demeurée inconnue au genre humain jusqu'à M. Descartes. L'auditoire en  
parut persuadé,<sup>2</sup> [*i.m.*: Lett. 10 MS. de Regius à Descartes] et les Magistrats, après  
avoir honoré ce discours de leur approbation, ordonnèrent qu'il serait imprimé et  
publiquement distribué sous leur autorité, tant pour honorer la mémoire de leur  
Professeur, que pour donner des marques éclatantes de la reconnaissance qu'ils | 21  
20 avaient du service important que leur avait rendu M. Descartes en formant un tel  
disciple.<sup>3</sup>

[B]

M. Regius fut outré d'une conduite si malhonnête, [*i.m.*: Lettr. 10 MS. de Regius]  
et ayant confronté son livre avec les réponses que M. Descar- | tes avait faites près | 37  
de deux ans auparavant à ses objections, il ne put retenir l'indignation qui lui fit

1 Baillet refers to the reprint of the funeral oration in *ÆMILIUS* 1651.

2 This is obviously exaggerated, as the majority of the audience had probably never heard of Descartes before. See my commentary on *ÆM/D* 5.

3 This is without a doubt another exaggeration of either Regius or Baillet. It was common practice that a funeral oration was printed.



prendre la plume pour en marquer ses ressentiments à M. Descartes.<sup>4</sup> Les couleurs  
 5 qu'il donne dans sa lettre à l'ingratitude et à la mauvaise foi de M. Plempius  
 sont si vives, qu'on ne peut les exprimer de sa langue en la nôtre sans entrer  
 dans de semblables transports de colère contre une conduite si lâche.<sup>5</sup> Il dit qu'à  
 l'égard des endroits où M. Descartes découvrait les secrets les plus cachés de  
 la nature, et où consistait la principale force de ses réponses, Plempius a eu la  
 10 malice de faire le muet, ou d'en omettre au moins la plus grande partie. Et que  
 pour ceux qu'il rapporte, il les estropie et les mutile de telle manière qu'il en  
 corrompt entièrement le sens. Qu'à l'endroit où il traite de la circulation du sang,  
 il se contente de rapporter simplement les difficultés, comme si on n'y avait pas  
 encore fait de réponses, quoique celles que M. Descartes y avait données fussent  
 15 très convaincantes. Qu'à l'endroit où M. Descartes rapporte plusieurs causes qui  
 jointes ensemble produisent le battement du cœur, Plempius n'en rapporte qu'une  
 qui est la chaleur. Si M. Descartes, après avoir allégué les raisons nécessaires  
 pour la conviction d'une chose, y en ajoute quelque autre moins nécessaire servant  
 seulement à un plus grand éclaircissement de la chose, Plempius est assez de  
 20 mauvaise foi pour ne s'attacher qu'à cette dernière raison, comme si elle avait  
 été donnée pour fondamentale ou essentielle; et laissant à supposer que ce serait  
 l'unique qui aurait été alléguée par M. Descartes, il s'étudie à la rendre ridicule;  
 ce qu'il fait ordinairement dans les endroits qu'il ne comprend pas.

[C]

L'impression de l'oraison funèbre de Monsieur Reneri faite pour le commencement  
 de l'année 1640 par l'ordre des mêmes Magistrats,<sup>6</sup> avait encore aigri son [Voetius']  
 esprit de nouveau, mais elle ne l'avait pas découragé. Il avait cru, au contraire, que  
 sous les acclamations publiques que l'on donnait à M. Descartes, il pourrait agir  
 5 plus sourdement, et avec moins de soupçons contre lui. [*Im.*: Lettr. MS. de Reg. 8  
 et 10. Lettr. d'Emil. à Desc.,<sup>7</sup> etc.] Mais pour venir à bout de cette entreprise, il  
 fallait ruiner M. Regius. C'est à quoi il travailla de toutes ses forces, s'étudiant à  
 rechercher dans ses leçons et ses écrits de quoi lui susciter un procès.

4 In his letter of 15 February 1638, Descartes answers several questions put to him by Plemp. The Leuven professor discusses these replies in PLEMPIUS 1638 (see AT I 534–536). The present letter confirms that Regius had received copies of Descartes' correspondence with Plemp (cf. R/D 1, ll. 28–31).

5 Cf. D/R 13, ll. 42–45.

6 Baillet only knew the reprint of the oration in ÆMILIUS 1651, and he was unaware that the original title page gives 1639 as the year of publication. The oration was probably printed towards the end of 1639, because the printer of the Academy, Ægidius Roman, did not charge the city for printing orations between January and September 1639, whereas the city's treasurer paid him for publishing several orations in the period October 1639 till September 1640 (GAU, 'Rekeningen van de tweede kameraar'). For the printer Roman, see EVERS 1934, 28–31; GRUYS/DE WOLF 1980, 77.

7 ÆM/D 5.

[D]

Ce Medecin s'appelle M<sup>r</sup> Plempius comme on le peut voir dans la 8<sup>e</sup> et 10<sup>e</sup> lettre de celles que M<sup>r</sup> le Roy a ecrites a M<sup>r</sup> Desc(artes) ...

[...]

... par la 10<sup>e</sup> letttr de M<sup>r</sup> le Roy a M<sup>r</sup> Descartes il est constant que M<sup>r</sup> le Roy  
 5 avoit fait venir de Leide le livre de M<sup>r</sup> Plempius<sup>8</sup> des le commencement de l'année  
 1640 ...<sup>9</sup>

## COMMENTARY

*Date*

The exact dates of Regius' letters 8 and 10 in the Clerselier collection, taken together in R/D 11 because letter 8 is mentioned only once in connection with letter 10, are not found in *Vie* nor in *ExI*. A note in *ExI* (text D), however, gives an indication for the date of the letters: referring to letter no. 10 it states that Regius received a copy of Plem's *De fundamentis medicinae* (PLEMPIUS 1638) in early 1640. This date is confirmed by Baillet's observation that Æmilius' funeral oration for Reneri (ÆMILIUS 1639) appeared in early 1640 (text C, ll. 1–2). Although Baillet is in fact mistaken — the oration was printed in (late) 1639 — his remark shows that he assumes R/D 11 to be written in early 1640.

*Text*

My presentation of R/D 11 differs from AT in two respects. First, Adam and Tannery take Regius' letters 8 and 10 in the Clerselier collection together with a letter by Æmilius (no. 9 in the Clerselier collection), whereas I list Æmilius' letter separately (ÆM/D 5). Second, I add text D, part of the *ExI*-note quoted above, which explicitly refers to Regius letters 8 and 10 in the Clerselier collection.

*Context**Baillet and the ExI on the correspondence between Descartes and Plem*

The note in *ExI*<sup>10</sup> I use to date R/D 11 does not concern the Descartes–Regius correspondence, but Descartes' epistolary exchange with Plem on the circulation of the blood in early 1638. The four letters in question are published in CLE without date or

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<sup>8</sup> PLEMPIUS 1638.

<sup>9</sup> Clerselier published the correspondence between Descartes and Plem on the circulation of the blood without mentioning either the addressee or the date. In the note in the *ExI*, addressee and date of the correspondence are deduced (see my commentary).

<sup>10</sup> On the *ExI* in general, see the Introduction, § 2.3.

Plemp's name.<sup>11</sup> The note in *ExI* serves to establish the approximate date of the letters and to identify Descartes' correspondent. In establishing the date and the addressee, the annotator of the *ExI* makes use of three documents, namely of Regius' letters 8 and 10 in the Clerselier collection (R/D 11), and of D/R 13 (24 May 1640). The note runs as follows:

Ce Medecin s'appelle M<sup>r</sup> Plempius comme on le peut voir dans la 8<sup>e</sup> et 10<sup>e</sup> lettre de celles que M<sup>r</sup> le Roy a ecrites a M<sup>r</sup> Desc. qui sont inserees dans les fragmens. et par les lettres 7 et 9 du 2 Volume.<sup>12</sup> L'on voit aussy que cette lettre et les 3 suivantes sont du commencement de l'année 1638. puisque par la 10<sup>e</sup> lettre de M<sup>r</sup> le Roy a M<sup>r</sup> Descartes il est constant que M<sup>r</sup> le Roy avoit fait venir de Leide le livre de M<sup>r</sup> Plempius<sup>13</sup> des le commencement de l'année 1640, puis que M<sup>r</sup> Descartes dans la 81<sup>e</sup> de ses lettres du 1<sup>er</sup> Vol. quj est la 1<sup>ere</sup> adressee a M. le Roy il dit que des personnes avoient tiré copie de ses reponses a Monsr Plempius deux ans avant que le livre de M<sup>r</sup> Plempius parut. V. encore la lettre 87 du 2 Vol. p. 378.<sup>14</sup>

The conclusion — the addressee is Plemp and the correspondence dates from early 1638 — is correct. The argumentation for the date, however, is based on two false premises: 1. Plemp published the correspondence in *De fundamentis medicinae* in 1640; 2. the correspondence took place two years before it was published by Plemp.

The first premise is based upon R/D 11. Because Regius received Plemp's book in early 1640, the annotator assumed that the work actually appeared in 1640.<sup>15</sup> In reality, *De fundamentis medicinae* was published in September 1638.<sup>16</sup>

The second premise is based upon the following passage in D/R 13, in which Descartes comments on Regius' accusation that Plemp distorted Descartes' arguments in *De fundamentis medicinae*:

Ubi dicis cur Pl(empius) meas responsiones mutilasset, posset forte addi probatio, quod, biennio ante eius librum, a multis fuerint visae et exscriptae.<sup>17</sup>

The annotator read the passage as follows: 'Where you say that Plemp mutilated my replies, you could perhaps add the proof of that, namely that these replies were seen

11 Plemp to Descartes, [January 1638] (AT I 497–499), Descartes to Plemp, 15 February 1638 (AT I 521–534), Plemp to Descartes, [March 1638] (AT II 52–54), and Descartes to Plemp, 23 March 1638 (AT II 62–69). Clerselier gives the letters in a French translation, for which he used VAN BEVERWIJCK 1644. Descartes supplied Johan van Beverwijck with copies of the correspondence (cf. AT III 3–6, 717–718). In Van Beverwijck's edition the correspondence is without date and Plemp is not specifically named. On Van Beverwijck and his possible meeting with Descartes, see R/D 52A. On Van Beverwijck, see the *Biographical Lexicon*.

12 Respectively Descartes to Plemp, 3 October 1637 (AT I 409–412) and Descartes to Plemp, 20 December 1637 (AT I 475–477). In both cases Clerselier supplies the correspondent's name.

13 PLEMPIUS 1638.

14 Descartes to Huygens, 9 March 1639. The draft of the letter is published in CLE without date and addressee (AT II 49). The autograph is in ROTH 1926, 72/AT II 660.

15 This is Baillet's opinion as well, cf. *Vie*, II, 36.

16 Plemp's dedication of *De fundamentis medicinae* is dated 30 August 1638 (cf. AT I 521).

17 D/R 13, ll. 42–45; AT III 68.

and copied by many two years before his book [appeared]'.<sup>18</sup> This rendering, which is in itself a correct translation, is mistaken, because the correspondence in question took place in early 1638, and Plemp's book was published in the same year. The appropriate translation, the second interpretation, would therefore be: 'two years ago, before his book [appeared]'. However, I am not sure that this is what Descartes meant in D/R 13. It may very well be the case that Regius did not inform Descartes of the year of publication of Plemp's work, but only that he had received it in early 1640. Indeed, if Regius had mentioned the year of publication, it is difficult to explain the annotator's assumption that the work appeared in 1640. Now, if Regius did not mention the year of publication, Descartes will have assumed that it had appeared recently, which can account for the first interpretation.

This explanation is somewhat undermined by Regius himself. He adopted Descartes' suggestion to add proof of Plemp's misconduct in his first disputation; in fact he repeated Descartes' own words: 'litterae istae, biennio ante editum Plempii librum à compluribus descriptae' (AT III 732). Regius would in any case have known that the first interpretation is incorrect. Did he just naturally choose for the second interpretation, or did he not give Descartes' comment a second thought?

Finally, there is Plemp himself. Ushered by Regius, he published Descartes' letters in extenso in the second edition of *De fundamentis medicinae* (PLEMPIUS 1644). But he shows his discontent with Regius, saying that it is slander to claim that the letters in question were seen and copied two years before his book appeared, because they were written in the same year as the book as published, indeed, the chapter in which the letters are found was printed in the same month.<sup>19</sup> So Plemp demonstrates that the first interpretation is false, but then again, perhaps he deliberately chooses the first interpretation in order to be able to refute a false accusation.

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<sup>18</sup> This is in fact the standard interpretation/translation, cf. AM IV 65–66; RL, 31; M, 335; B, 97.  
<sup>19</sup> PLEMPIUS 1644, 152; also in AT I 536.

12  
Regius to Descartes [Leiden]  
5 [15] May 1640

*Vie*, II, 24 [A], 59 [B], 103 [C] (no. 11).  
AT, III, 60–61 (no. 188).

[A]

[*I.m.*: Narrat. Hist. Acad. Ultr. p. 12.<sup>1</sup>] Ils assemblèrent leur Université, et sur la proposition favorable du Recteur Schotanus, il fut résolu qu'on en ferait la demande aux Magistrats.<sup>2</sup> Le Recteur lui-même fut député au Sénat pour cet effet, avec le sieur Arnold Senguerdius, Professeur en philosophie. Les Magistrats n'eurent  
5 aucune peine à l'accorder, tant à cause de la satisfaction que M. Regius avait donnée à tout le monde jusque-là, que parce que le sieur Stratenus, son ancien, qui avait le plus d'intérêt de s'y opposer, et de demander ces augmentations de gages pour lui, était des premiers et des plus ardents à solliciter pour son nouveau collègue. [*I.m.*: Lettr. XI MS. de Reg. à Desc.] Ainsi les appointements de M. Regius, qui  
10 n'avaient été que de 400 florins jusqu'alors, furent rehaussés de la moitié; mais il ne commença que l'année suivante à toucher les 600 florins.<sup>3</sup> Encore y attachait-on un nouvel emploi, qui consistait à expliquer les problèmes de physique, lorsqu'il ne serait pas occupé de sa botanique, c'est-à-dire de l'explication des plantes et des  
15 simples.<sup>4</sup> Il fit part à M. Descartes de la joie qu'il avait reçue de cette commission, parce qu'elle lui présentait de nouvelles occasions d'enseigner et d'étendre sa nouvelle philosophie.

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1 NH, 12/*Querelle*, 85–86.

2 Although full professor since March 1639 (see R/D 4, n. 4), Regius' salary had never been raised, and his wage of 400 guilders was considerably less than that of the other Utrecht professors. Senguerd for example, appointed at the same time as Regius, earned 700 guilders since he became full professor. In April 1640, the Senate decided to request the Vroedschap to raise Regius' wage.

3 Baillet is mistaken as to the date. On 17/27 April 1640, the Vroedschap raised Regius' salary to 600 guilders as from 5/15 April 1640 (*Resolutiën*, 139–140). For the text of the resolution, see my commentary.

4 For Regius' course in physics, see my commentary. 'Simple' is a general term for medicinal plants, cf. MANUIA 1970–1975, III, 681. In 1639, the Vroedschap and Regius took care of the planning of the botanical garden on the Sonneburgh bulwark. The Leiden hortus offered a large quantity of seeds (WUNNE 1888, 41; *Resolutiën*, 132), and the professor of botany himself billed the city for various purchases (DODT VAN FLENSBURG 1843, 292, 294, 298). Regius' competence in botany was challenged during a disputation presided by Stratenus in December 1641 (NH, 25/*Querelle*, 95; cf. SCHOOCK 1643, [LIII], 9, 37, 38 43/*Querelle*, 169, 184, 198–199, 201 and *Epistola ad Voetium*, AT VIII B 15–16). His sole publication on the subject is REGIUS 1650B, which is no more than a plan of the hortus, a workbook for students, who were to fill in the names of the plants and their properties themselves.

[B]

M. Regius avait eu soin auparavant [*i.m.*: En Mai 1640.] de prendre avec M. Descartes des mesures nécessaires pour mettre ses thèses hors d'atteinte, et il lui avait fait croire, en lui proposant la chose, qu'il n'avait dans ces thèses point d'autre dessein que d'étendre sa philosophie, et de lui donner de l'éclat. Ses écoliers le pressaient, dit-il, [*i.m.*: Lettr. XI de Regius, MS.] incessamment de faire imprimer sa physique, afin d'exposer aux yeux de tout l'univers une philosophie qui ne faisait encore bruit que dans quelques provinces. Il y fit réflexion, et ayant cru qu'il serait à propos de sonder les esprits par quelque essai, il avait eu la pensée de la réduire auparavant en questions, et de la proposer dans des disputes publiques. Mais quelques-uns de ses collègues, appréhendant que les nouvelles opinions dont elle était remplie ne fissent quelque tort à leur Université, à cause que son établissement était encore assez récent, crurent qu'il valait mieux la faire imprimer comme l'écrit d'un simple particulier. M. Regius estima néanmoins qu'il serait bon de la faire précéder d'une dispute publique pour en être le prélude, et il choisit ses opinions concernant le mouvement du cœur, des artères, et du sang, pour en former ses thèses, qu'il envoya ensuite à M. Descartes pour les corriger.<sup>5</sup>

[C]

Cependant il [Descartes] avait fait voir son manuscrit<sup>6</sup> à quelques amis d'Utrecht [*i.m.*: Dès le mois de Mai 1640.] qui l'en avaient instamment sollicité, et particulièrement à Messieurs Regius et Emilius qui en furent charmés jusqu'à l'extase. [*i.m.*: Lettr. 11 de Regius MS. du 5 de Mai.] M. Descartes, qui ne cherchait pas les éloges de ses amis, leur avait enjoint d'examiner l'écrit, tant en grammairiens qu'en philosophes. Il fallut obéir, mais ils ne trouvèrent à toucher qu'à la ponctuation et à l'orthographe.<sup>7</sup> [*i.m.*: Tom. 1 des lettr. page 384, 385.<sup>8</sup>]

5 Descartes' comments are found in D/R 13. The disputation, REGIUS 1640A, was submitted on 10/20 June 1640, cf. my commentary on R/D 14.

6 In November 1639, Descartes informed Mersenne of his new project in metaphysics, the *Meditationes de prima philosophia*, the composition of which he completed in March 1640 (to Mersenne, 13 November 1639, AT II 622/CM VIII 611; 11 March 1640, AT III 35/CM IX 189–190). In November 1640, Descartes sent the manuscript to Mersenne to have it printed in Paris (AT III 235/CM X 232). The book left the printing office of Michel Soly in August 1641. The history of the text is analysed in CRAPULLI 1976, and VAN OTEGEM 2002, I, 152–161.

7 Baillet's *Vie* continues with R/D 14C, in which the biographer remarks that Regius and Æmilius submitted two objections as well. Descartes' replies are found in D/R 15.

8 D/R 15, ll. 1–9.

## COMMENTARY

*Date*

Baillet gives the date of the letter, 5 May 1640, without indication of the calendar used. The *ExI*, in two annotations to D/R 13, which is Descartes' reply to the present letter, provides sufficient information to fix the date on 5 [/15] May. The first note confirms Baillet's date of 5 May.<sup>9</sup> According to the second note, Regius' letter no. 11 to Descartes in the Clerselier collection — the present letter — is dated 15 May.<sup>10</sup> The first note and Baillet date the letter according to the Julian calendar, the second note to the Gregorian calendar.

*Context**1. Regius' course on physical problems*

The records of the Vroedschap of 17/27 April 1640 relate the following regarding Regius' salary increase:

The salary of Henrick de Roy, Medicinae et Botanices Professor of the Academy in this town, is raised to six hundred guilders a year, with effect from last Easter [5/15 April 1640], on condition that he takes on whatever courses the Burgomasters and the governors are herewith authorised to decide upon.<sup>11</sup>

In order to entice the Vroedschap to raise his salary, Regius asked Voetius to intercede with the second Burgomaster for permission to lecture once a week on physical problems (*Problemata*<sup>12</sup>).<sup>13</sup> Regius explained that, since he would deal with particular questions of optics, mechanics, et cetera, the lectures would not interfere with the regular philosophical curriculum. Voetius agreed, and the professor of philosophy, Arnold Senguerdius, did not object.<sup>14</sup> NH subsequently recounts how Regius misused his course to explain the 'arcana of the new and presumptuous philosophy', while

9 'Celle cy sert de reponse a celles de Mr le Roy de 5 May 1640. La 12e lettre de Mr le Roy, datee du 20 May 1640 sert de reponse a celle cy', *ExI*, I, 384, *in margine*.

10 'Cette lettre [...] repond a (la) 11e des Ms de Roy, dattée du 15 May 1640 et la 12e des Ms de Regius du 30 May 1640 repond a celle cy', *ExI*, I, note on an inserted leaflet, attached to p. 384.

11 'De Gaige van Do. Henrick de Roy, Medicinae et Botanices Professor in de Academie alhier, is verhoocht tot ses hondert guldens 's jaers, ingegaen Paesschen verleden, mits doende sulcke lessen als arbitrerem sullen d'Heeren Burgemeesteren ende Gecommitteerden, die daertoe geauthoriseert worden bij desen', *Resolutiën*, 139–140.

12 *Problemata* is a pseudo-Aristotelian collection of medical and physical problems.

13 It is suggested in the manuscript version of NH that the Vroedschap had no sufficient means at the time: 'Quandoquidem autem hoc D.D. Professorum pro D. Regio conatu non statim effectum fuit quod sperabatur, sive quod difficilis esset Ampliss. Senatus ad majores expensas pro illo tempore, sive quod gravissimis et publicis negotiis alia aliis urgentibus protelaretur', RAU, *Acta Academiae Ultraiectinae*, f. 44v. In NH, 12, the complete passage is replaced by the words 'Circa idem tempus' ('Vers la même époque', *Querelle*, 85). On Frederick Ruysch (†1670), the second Burgomaster, see NNBW, III, 1107–1108. First Burgomaster from October 1639 till October 1640 was Anthonis de Goyer. Both men were re-elected in October 1640. VANDE WATER 1729, III, 196.

14 NH, 11–13/*Querelle*, 85–86.

attacking and despising traditional philosophy.<sup>15</sup> In a letter to Mersenne, Descartes confirms that Regius did indeed nothing less than that.<sup>16</sup>

## 2. A Cartesian textbook of natural philosophy

In his private lectures, the courses reserved for advanced students, Regius used to dictate his students a textbook in the New Philosophy. Even before he took up the correspondence with Descartes, Regius set out to compose a compendium of natural philosophy along Cartesian lines, taking Descartes' *Météores* and *Dioptrique* for a starting point (R/D 1A, ll. 24–27). In the spring of 1639, Regius informed Descartes that he had almost completed the work, asking the philosopher's opinion on it (cf. R/D 6B, D/R 17, ll. 8–9). By the time he took on the lectures on *problemata*, a first version of the textbook was ready, and his students urged him to publish it (cf. R/D 12B). Over the years, the textbook figures under different names: *Physiologia*, *Compendium physices*, *Prodromus novae philosophiae*, and finally, in 1642, *Physica fundamenta*.<sup>17</sup>

No student's notebook has been retrieved, but fragments of one such notebook survive in Schoock's *Admiranda methodus*.<sup>18</sup> In the introduction, partly quoted by Schoock, Regius announces he will follow the path of Descartes and adopt his principles (*Querelle*, 198). One of the chapters of the notebook is called 'Mundus' — probably after Descartes' *Le Monde*, a copy of which Regius received in the spring of 1641 (cf. D/R 19, ll. 75–79) — in which the Copernican worldview is defended (*Querelle*, 246).<sup>19</sup> It was a complete textbook on physics, covering the whole of nature including man. Its success and Regius' wish to have it published, may have prompted Descartes to compose a textbook of his own (*Principia philosophiae*, 1644).<sup>20</sup>

15 NH, 13/*Querelle*, 86. The adjectives *novae et praesumptae* are found in the manuscript version of NH, f. 45v.

16 '[Regius] fait profession ouverte de ma Philosophie, et fait mesme des leçons particulieres de Physique, et en peu de mois rend ses disciples capables de se moquer entierement de la vieille Philosophie', Descartes to Mersenne, 11 November 1640, AT III 231/CM X 223. Note that Descartes talks of private, not public, lectures in physics.

17 Cf. AT VII 582–583; D/R 17, ll. 13–14; REGIUS 1642, 20. The latter description indicates that it served as a prototype of Regius' *Fundamenta physices* (REGIUS 1646).

18 SCHOOCK 1643/*Querelle*, 157–320.

19 More references to the notebook are found in SCHOOCK 1643/*Querelle*, 247, 251, 282, 286, 288, 289–290, 292, 299–300.

20 Cf. Descartes to Mersenne, 11 November 1640, AT III 233/CM X 225–226; [December 1640], AT III 259–260/CM X 330.



13  
Descartes [Leiden] to Regius  
[24 May 1640]

CLE, I, 386–389, (no. 81-V).  
AT, III, 66–70 (no. 190-V).  
AM, IV, 62–69; RL, 26–32; M, 333–338; B, 94–99.

In titulo non ponerem *de triplici coctione*, sed tantum *de coctione*.<sup>1</sup> Item etiam lineam nonam, pro N. et C(artesio),<sup>2</sup> rogo ut totam deleas; neque enim hîc valet Hervaei exemplum, qui longius hinc abest quam ego, nec, ut puto, Vallaeo<sup>3</sup> tam coniunctus est quam ego tibi; et quamvis esset res  
5 similis, non tam exemplo moveor quam causa.

In Thesium lineâ primâ, tollerem haec verba: *caloris vivifici*, etc.<sup>4</sup>

In fine, pro his verbis: *in rectâ conformatione* etc., mallet: *in* [67]  
*praeparatione*<sup>5</sup> *particularum insensibilium ex quibus alimenta constant, ut eae conformationem humano corpori componendo aptam acquirant.*  
10 *Haec praeparatio alia est communis et minus praecipua, quae fit omnibus viis per quas particulae transeunt; alia particularis et praecipua, quae est triplex: 1. in ventriculo et intestinis, 2. in hepate, 3. in corde. 1<sup>a</sup> In ventriculo et intestinis fit, cum cibus ore masticatus et deglutitus, sicut et potus, vi caloris à corde communicati, et humoris ab arteriis eò*  
15 *impulsi, dissolvitur et in chylum convertitur. 2<sup>a</sup> In hepate, cum chylus*

6 In ... no new paragraph in CLE 7 In ... no new paragraph in CLE

1 In D/R 13 Descartes comments on the draft of Regius' first disputation (REGIUS 1640A). Descartes probably objected to (a part of) the proposed title, because it sounds too traditional (see my commentary). The title page of the disputation, which was defended on 10/20 June 1640, reads *Pro sanguinis circulatione*, but reprinting the text in *Physiologia* IIa–b, Regius used the heading *De coctione* for the first part of the text (see Appendix, 212, l. 13). The only copy of REGIUS 1640A I was able to trace, is kept in the National Library of Medicine, Maryland. In AT III 727–734, the text of the disputation is reprinted from an unspecified copy unearthed by Cornelis de Waard.

2 In the ninth line of the title page Regius intended to put a dedication, which he withdrew from the definitive lay-out. The 'C' stands without a doubt for 'Cartesio', because it is clear from ll. 38–41 that Descartes was mentioned on the title page with his Latinised name. The 'N' probably denotes both Harvey and Walaeus since they are both mentioned in the lines that follow. Regius may have wanted to dedicate his disputation to the champions of the circulation of the blood, 'Pro Harvaeo, Walaeo et Cartesio', just like Walaeus had dedicated his disputation on blood circulation 'Pro Cl. Harveio' (WALAEUS 1640; on Johannes Walaeus, see the *Biographical Lexicon*). Such a dedication, however, would imply that they share the same views, something Descartes wishes to avoid (cf. to Mersenne, 9 February 1639, AT II 500–502/CM VIII 296–297). Descartes' remark may explain why Harvey is not mentioned at all in REGIUS 1640A.

3 Johannes Walaeus.

4 These words are not in the final text of the disputation, so Regius seems to have followed Descartes' advice.

5 REGIUS 1640A: 'adaptione'.

*in illud, non per aliquam vim attractricem, sed solâ suâ fluiditate et  
 pressione vicinarum partium delatus, sanguinique reliquo mixtus, ibi  
 fermentatur, digeritur,<sup>6</sup> et in chymum abit. 3<sup>a</sup> | In corde, cum chymus, 387  
 sanguini à reliquo corpore ad cor redeunti permixtus, et simul cum eo in  
 20 hepate praeparatus, in verum et perfectum sanguinem per ebullitionem  
 pulsificam commutatur. Atque haec tertia coctio<sup>7</sup> etc.<sup>8</sup> Vides facilè cur  
 ponam coctionem generalem quae fit in omnibus viis, et ex consequenti  
 etiam in omni parte corporis; quia ubicunquè est motus, fieri potest ibi  
 aliqua alteratio particularum quae moventur; et non video quid aliud  
 25 coctio sit quam talis alteratio; nec cur potius illam in venis Gastricis et  
 Meseraicis, quam in reliquis omnibus, fieri concedas. Non pono *succum  
 spirituosum*, quia non video distinctè quid ista verba significant. Non  
 pono *chyli partes meliores*, sed chylum, quia omnes eius partes alendo  
 corpori inserviunt; et si benè calculum ponamus, ipsa etiam excrementa,  
 30 praesertim quae ex venis excernuntur, quandiu sunt in corpore, inter eius  
 partes sunt recensenda; munere enim ibi suo funguntur; et nulla est pars [68]  
 quae tandem non abeat in excrementum, modò id quod egreditur per  
 insensilem transpirationem, excrementum etiam appellemus.<sup>9</sup> Chymum  
 autem fermentari puto in hepate, et digeri, hoc est, prout hoc verbum à  
 35 Chymicis<sup>10</sup> usurpatur, propter aliquam moram alterari.*

Pagina 5, deletem: *quae à copiosis eius spiritibus et oleoginositate  
 moderata oritur; neque enim hoc satis clarè rem explicat.*<sup>11</sup>

6 REGIUS 1640A: 'et (ut chymicorum more loquar) digeritur', cf. l. 34–35.

7 REGIUS 1640A: 'praeparatio'.

8 With some minor changes — the most significant ones are indicated above — Regius adopted Descartes' revision in REGIUS 1640A, [1–2]/AT III 727–728.

9 In *Physiologia* IIb, 29 (Appendix, 220, ll. 5–8), Regius lists insensible perspiration under bodily excretion, invoking the famous statical experiments performed by his Paduan instructor, Santorio Santorii (1561–1636). Santorii, one of Regius' supervisors at Padua in 1623 (see the *Chronicle*), studied philosophy and medicine at the famous University of Padua. After his graduation in medicine in 1582, he started his statical experiments in medicine, or quantitative investigations of metabolism. In 1611, Santorii was appointed professor of theoretical medicine in Padua, which chair he occupied till 1624. In 1614 he published his new ideas on medicine in *De medicina statica*, in which the quantitative significance of insensible perspiration is demonstrated. The Paduan professor introduced medical instruments that changed the history of medicine, including a thermometer to measure bodily temperature, and a *pulsilogium*, a device to measure the pulse. Our attention is aroused by his interesting analogy between organism and clock, the movements of which depend on number, form, and the disposition of parts. Cf. GRMEK 1990, 71–76, and Grmek's article on Santorii in DSB, 12, 101–104. Santorii's quantitative approach to medicine strongly influenced Regius. Cf. ROTHSCUH 1968, 51–52; FARINA 1975.

10 Descartes had an interest in chemistry (cf. to Mersenne, 15 April 1630, AT I 137/CM II 423), but a low opinion of the so-called (al-)chemists, the forerunners of Jean Baptiste van Helmont (1577–1644) (cf. to Mersenne, 30 July 1640, AT III 130–131/CM IX 524–525; to Mersenne, 7 December 1642, AT III 598/CM XI 364; to Newcastle, [23 November 1646], AT IV 569–570).

11 The explanation is indeed deleted in the final text of the disputation. It seems that Regius attempted to

In fine paginae 8, nomen meum rursus invenio, quod fortè honestiùs quàm in titulo possum dissimulare, modò, si placet, epithetis magis temperes; et malim etiam vero nomine *Descartes*, quàm ficto *Cartesius* vocari.<sup>12</sup>

Ubi dicis cur Pl(empius) meas responsiones mutilasset, posset fortè addi probatio, quòd, biennio ante eius librum, à multis fuerint visae et exscriptae.<sup>13</sup> Videnturque etiam delenda haec verba: *vel callido vel ignorant*, et verba quam mitissima veritatem causae meliùs confirmabunt.<sup>14</sup>

Et finem paginae nonae sic mutarem: *secundo, quod foetus in utero existens, ubi isto respirationis usu privatur, duos habet meatus, qui spontè clauduntur in adultis; unum qui canaliculi instar est, | per quem pars sanguinis in dextro cordis sinu rarefacti in Aortam transmittitur, parte altera in pulmones abeunte; et alium, per quem pars sanguinis in sinistro cordis sinu rarefaciendi è Vena Cava defluit, et alteri parti ex pulmonibus venienti permiscetur.*<sup>15</sup> Neque enim negari potest, quin sanguinis pars in foetu transeat per pulmones; sed praeterea usus respirationis explicatio, quae habetur pagina 10, praecedere debet eius causas, quae dantur pag. 8.

Quantùm ad Venas Lacteas, nihil definio, quia nondum illas vidi; sed novi hic duos iuvenes Medicinae Doctores (Silvius et Schagen nominantur<sup>16</sup>), qui videntur non indocti, et se illas saepius observasse

38 In ... no new paragraph in CLE 42 Ubi ... no new paragraph in CLE 46 Et ... no new paragraph in CLE 56 Quantùm ... no new paragraph in CLE

apply Descartes' theory on particles. Compare the corresponding text to Descartes' *Météores*, I–II (AT VI 231–248) in *Physiologia* I, 7–8 (Appendix, 203–204). Cf. ROTHSCUH 1968, 53.

12 Regius adjusted the text to '... viri Nobilissimi et Incomparabilis D. Renati des Cartes ...' (REGIUS 1640A, [5]/AT III 732). Descartes changed his mind on the issue of Descartes/Cartesius later that year (cf. to Mersenne, 31 December 1640, AT III 277/CM X 362), but all his Latin works are nonetheless published under his French name.

13 See R/D 1B, ll. 28–31, and R/D 11B, and especially my commentary on R/D 11.

14 Following Descartes' advice, Regius deleted these acrimonious words in REGIUS 1640A. For another example of Descartes' disapproval of Regius' language, see D/R 26, ll. 2–5.

15 The passage is taken over almost verbatim in REGIUS 1640A, [6]/AT III 733, with the notable exception of *in adultis*, l. 48, which Regius substituted with the more accurate *in lucem editis*. The explanation closely resembles *Discours* (AT VI 53), in which the observation that, although the fetus does not breathe, some blood passes through its lungs, is absent. It is also missing in Descartes' later work, *Description du corps humain* (AT XI 238).

16 For Franciscus de le Boe Sylvius, see the *Biographical Lexicon*. Franciscus van der Schagen (c.1615–1673) graduated at Leiden University in 1639, on a medical disputation *De epilepsia* (Leiden: B. and A. Elsevier; a copy in British Library). As a physician, he first practised in Leiden, then in Amsterdam. In 1640, he was present at the demonstrations on the circulation of the blood by Walaeus (cf. SCHOUTEN 1972, 116, LINDEBOOM 1984, 1737–1738). That Van der Schagen and Sylvius performed various anatomical experiments on blood circulation and the lymphatic vascular system together, is attested by Sylvius himself (cf. BAUMANN 1949, 14–15; M, 336) and Walaeus (WALAEUS 1641, 395, 408).

affirmant, earumque valvulas humoris regressum versus intestina im-  
 60 pedire, adeò ut planè à te dissentiant;<sup>17</sup> et ego in eorum sententiam  
 valdè propendo, ita ut suspicer Venas Lacteas ab illis Meseraicis in  
 eo tantum differre, quod nulli arteriae sint coniunctae, ideoque succus  
 ciborum in iis albus est, in aliis vero statim fit ruber, quia sanguini per  
 arterias circulato permiscetur. Prima occasione illas in cane vivo simul  
 65 quaeremus: interim, si mihi credis, totum illud corollarium omittes.<sup>18</sup>

Quod ad difficultatem, *quomodo cor possit detumescere, si pars  
 sanguinis rarefacti in eo remaneat*, facillè solvitur; quia minima tantum  
 eius pars manet, ventriculis implendis non sufficiens; impetus enim  
 quo ille egreditur, sufficeret ad omnem educendum, nisi prius valvulae  
 70 Arteriae magnae et Venae arteriosae clauderentur,<sup>19</sup> quàm totus esset  
 elapsus; et quantumvis parva portio in ventriculis manens sufficit ad  
 fermentationem.

Tandem tandem hodie accepimus sententiam pro I(acobo) A W(aes-  
 senaer), cuius exemplar, postquam erit exscriptum, hoc est post unam aut  
 75 alteram diem, ad ipsum<sup>20</sup> mittam.<sup>21</sup> Ita facta est ut, si magnus aliquis fuis-

17 Although the chylous vessels (*venas lacteas*) had been discovered by the Paduan professor of medicine Gaspare Aselli (1581–1625) in 1622, when dissecting a living dog that had recently been fed, and its publication knew two editions in 1627 and 1628, the spread of the discovery appears to have been fairly slow (AUCANTE 1999, 609). But the third edition of Aselli's *De lactibus sive lacteis vasis quarto vasorum mesaraicorum genere ... dissertatio* by the Leiden printer Maire in 1640, put the question of chylous vessels high on the agenda, and probably induced Regius to add a corollary on it to his disputation. One of Aselli's conclusions is that these vessels have valves, which prevent the chyle from flowing back to the intestines.

18 Regius indeed dropped the corollary. From Descartes' letter to Mersenne of [30 July 1640] it is clear that meanwhile Descartes (and perhaps Regius too) performed several vivisections on dogs. Descartes confidently reiterates his view on chylous vessels: '... ie ne mets point de difference entre elles [blood and chylous vessels], sinon que le suc est blanc dans (les) lactées, a cause qu'elles n'ont point d'arteres qui les accompagne, et rouge dans les autres, a cause qu'il s'y mesle avec le sang qui vient des arteres' (AT III 141/CM IX 535). Regius makes the same distinction in REGIUS 1640B, 9–10 and in *Physiologia* IIa, 20 (Appendix, 213, ll. 21–27). According to Trevisani, the experiments referred to in the letter to Mersenne point to contacts between Descartes and Walaeus, which is, however, by no means certain (TREVISANI 1992, 245, n. 152). For the development of Descartes' view on chylous vessels, compare TREVISANI 1992, 242–244, and AUCANTE 1999, 608–613. See also D/R 20, ll. 5–9.

19 In traditional Galenic medicine the blood-vessel connecting the lungs and the right ventricle is called arterial vein (*vena arterialis*), the vessel connecting the lungs and the left ventricle venous artery (*arteria venosa*). Cf. SIEGEL 1968, 89–90. The discovery of the circulation of the blood rendered this terminology obsolete, and Descartes therefore noted in his *Discours* (AT VI 47) that the arterial vein is in fact an artery (the *pulmonary artery*), and the venous artery a vein (the *pulmonary vein*). Cf. *Physiologia* IIb, 25 (Appendix, 217, ll. 15–16).

20 *Ad ipsum*, that is, Van Waessenaer, and not Regius. The words are erroneously translated in AM and M as 'to you', as Bordoli remarks (B, 99). Baillet, relating that Descartes sent a copy of the judgement to Regius as well, makes the same mistake (*Vie*, II, 55, R/D 14A).

21 The ruling in the Stampioen-affair was issued on 24 May 1640 (cf. my commentary on R/D 6). The Leiden judges Golius and Van Schooten Sr favoured the solution of Van Waessenaer/Descartes over that of their

set condemnandus, non potuissent Iudices mitioribus verbis eius errores significare, sed nihilominus nullum verbum ex iis quae à W(aessenaer) scripta sunt, non approbant, et nullum verbum ex iis quae ab eius adversario, non condemnant. | [70]  
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80 Si quid sit de quo ampliorem explicationem desideres, paratum me semper invenies, ut seu scriptis seu verbis tibi serviam. Imò etiam, cum istae Theses disputabuntur, si velis, Ultraiectum excurram; sed modò nullus sciat, et in speculâ illâ, ex qua D<sup>a</sup> à Schurmans solet audire lectiones, possim latere.<sup>22</sup> Vale.

## COMMENTARY

*Date*

In the penultimate paragraph of the letter, Descartes refers to the judgement in the Stampioen-affair rendered on 24 May 1640, which he received that very same day.

*Text*

The text actually belonging to Descartes' letter of 24 May 1640 is considerably shorter than the text of CLE and AT (AT no. 190). In AT, no. 190 consists of 20 paragraphs, which can be divided into four distinct parts. In paragraphs 1 to 4 Descartes deals with Regius' and Æmiliius' comments on the *Meditationes*. The second part, paragraphs 5 to 8, comprises several disjointed remarks on various topics. The third part, paragraphs 9 to 18, contains a detailed commentary on Regius' draft of his disputation on blood circulation (REGIUS 1640A). In the last part, paragraphs 19 and 20, Descartes mentions that the judgement in the Stampioen-affair has been pronounced, and finally some concluding remarks together with Descartes' proposal to attend Regius' imminent disputation on blood circulation.

Paragraphs 19 and 20 pertain without question to Descartes' letter of 24 May, indeed, they allow the letter to be dated.

On 5 [15] May, Regius sent Descartes a draft of his disputation on blood circulation, with a request for comment (R/D 12B). In R/D 14B (20/30 May) the philosopher is thanked for his remarks. Since several of the remarks of part three of AT no. 190 reoccur verbatim in the published text of the disputation, this part also belongs to the letter of 24 May.

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adversary Stampioen. The text of the judgement is printed in VAN WAESSENAER 1640, 81–86, and in STAMPIOEN 1640.

22 In his reply (R/D 14B) Regius invited Descartes to Utrecht, but there is no evidence that he actually witnessed the disputation. In a special box seat in the main auditorium Anna Maria van Schurman (see the *Biographical Lexicon*) was able to attend academic lectures without being noticed by the, exclusively male, students.

Paragraphs 1 to 4, however, concern Descartes' answer to R/D 14. I list them accordingly as D/R 15 (June 1640). Paragraphs 5 to 8 are fragments of three different letters from 1641, D/R 22, D/R 23 and D/R 27.

As a consequence, AT no. 190 is not one single letter but an amalgam of fragments of five different letters, only the second half of which, paragraphs 9 to 20, belongs to Descartes' letter of 24 May 1640.

### *Context*

#### *Regius' disputation Pro sanguinis circulatione (10/20 June 1640)*

##### *1. Opposition from within the University*

As soon as the rector, Bernardus Schotanus, heard that Regius intended to defend the theory of the circulation of the blood, he went to see the professor of medicine and asked him not to submit a disputation on this controversial subject (NH, 14–15/*Querelle*, 87–88). When Regius refused to comply, the rector assembled the Senate, which after some discussion, decided that since the text was not printed yet, Regius should prepare another disputation on a more traditional subject, to which Harvey's speculations could be appended in a corollary, with the additional formula 'to be defended by way of exercise'. Regius promised to obey the decision, but when Schotanus examined the definitive text, no substantial changes had been made. The Senate took the matter up with the *curatores*, but in the mean time Regius had the text printed, and presented with this fait accompli the *curatores* decided to allow Regius to submit the disputation.

##### *2. Contents*

As the subject for his first disputation Regius chose the specimen of Descartes' method that appealed most to the Utrecht professor of medicine: the circulation of the blood and the movement of the heart. Not surprisingly, Regius' text closely follows Descartes' *Discours* (AT VI 46–54),<sup>23</sup> but he supplements it with the explanation of the blood's rarefaction by fermentation, which Descartes developed in his correspondence with Plemp (AT I 530–531). The rarefaction of the blood as the cause of the heart's movement constitutes the principal disagreement between Descartes and Harvey. According to Descartes, blood leaves the heart, due to its rapid rarefaction, during the diastole or expansion of the heart, whereas Harvey holds the (correct) view, that blood is driven from the heart into the arteries during the systole or the contraction of the heart.<sup>24</sup>

The Cartesian explanation of blood circulation, the movement of the heart and respiration take up theses III to VIII in Regius' disputation. In the remaining theses, Regius cooked up something of his own. The first two theses, in which the manufacturing of food into blood is outlined, are largely Descartes' as well. The medical authority of the 16th century, Jean Fernel (1497–1558), distinguishes three kinds of concoction, the conversion of food into chyle in the stomach, the manufacturing of blood in the liver,

<sup>23</sup> See the notes to REGIUS 1640A in AT III 727–734.

<sup>24</sup> Recent studies on the divergent opinion on blood circulation and the working of the heart between Harvey/Walaeus and Descartes/Regius include FRENCH 1989, BITBOL-HESPÉRIÈS 1990, FUCHS 1992, GRENE 1993 and DESCARTES 2000, 245–255.

and the conversion of blood in the various parts of the body.<sup>25</sup> In Cartesian physiology, however, there is no qualitative distinction between these various kinds of concoction. Descartes urges Regius not to use traditional terminology (l. 1), and his proposal in ll. 7–21 is readily accepted by Regius, covering the larger part of the first two theses of the disputation.

The last theses, in which Regius presents a mechanistic account of respiration, make up for the lack of originality of the preceding paragraphs. In thesis IX he argues that inhalation does not result from any attractive power or a *fuga vacui* in the lungs, but from the muscular expansion of the chest outward which pushes the ambient air down into the lungs.<sup>26</sup> In the tenth thesis Regius distinguishes between voluntary and natural respiration. Natural respiration takes place whenever we do not actively control our breathing, e.g. in our sleep. This spontaneous movement of the muscles is regulated through a configuration of channels in the cerebral ventricle, controlling the influx of animal spirits through the nerves into the appropriate muscles.<sup>27</sup> Natural respiration thus works like a machine, comparable to the regular and reciprocal movements of a clock's pendulum, which solely depend on the configuration of its constituent parts, and the drive from a spring or weight.

It comes as no surprise that Descartes approved the definitive text of Regius' disputation. In July 1640 Descartes forwarded a copy of the disputation to his Paris correspondent:

Je vous envoie icy d'autres Theses, dans lesquelles on n'a rien du tout suivy que mes opinions, afin que vous sçachiez que s'il y en a qui les rejettent, il y en a aussi d'autres qui les embrassent. Peut-estre que quelques-uns de vos Medecins ne sont pas marris de voir ces Theses, et celui qui les a faites en prepare encore de semblables sur toute la Physiologie de la Medecine, et mesme, si ie luy voulois promettre assistance, sur toute le reste; mais ie ne la luy ose promettre, à cause qu'il y a mille choses que i'ignore; et ceux qui enseignent sont comme obligez de dire leur iugement de toutes choses.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> SHERRINGTON 1974, 69–73.

<sup>26</sup> This account of respiration came to be known as the 'Cartesian circle'. It has been attributed to Cornelis van Hogelande (VAN HOGELANDE 1646, cf. BERTHIER 1914, 62; for Van Hogelande, see the *Biographical Lexicon*) and Jan Swammerdam (1637–1680; SWAMMERDAM 1667, cf. BERTHIER 1914; 62, SWAMMERDAM 1975, 12–13; LINDEBOOM 1978, 73; LINDEBOOM 1984, 1923–1927), but credit should be given to Regius. The publication of his theory in REGIUS 1640A, *Physiologia* IIb and REGIUS 1646, did not escape notice; Thomas Bartholin corresponded on the subject with the French physician Abraham du Prat (1616–1660) in 1646 and with Regius himself in 1649 (BARTHOLIN 1740, I, 315–322, II, 423–428). When Regius rephrased his explanation of respiration in the draft of *Physiologia* IIb, Descartes proposed a modification, see D/R 22.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. GARIEPY 1990, 150. Descartes gives an identical account in *L'Homme* (AT XI 136–138), which work, although composed in the early 1630s, was published posthumously (see R/D 7, n. 4). Descartes never gave Regius a copy of the manuscript, but the Utrecht professor nevertheless secured a copy in 1646 (cf. AT IV 566–567/CM XIV 624). For his account of respiratory muscle-movement in REGIUS 1640A, Regius probably adapted Descartes' general explanation of muscle-movement in the *Dioptrique* (AT VI 109–112).

<sup>28</sup> Descartes to Mersenne, 22 July 1640, AT III 95–96/CM IX 492–493.

### 3. *The respondent Johannes Hayman*

The student who defended the theses in public was Johannes Hayman (c.1620–1666). Born in Zierikzee, Hayman attended Latin school at Vlissingen, and then moved to Utrecht to study medicine. He dedicated the disputation, among others, to Abraham Beeckman (1607–1663), a brother of Isaac Beeckman and rector of the Latin school at Vlissingen since 1636. According to Regius, Hayman defended the theses on blood circulation *cum magna laude*, even though he had been a medical student for only four months (REGIUS 1640B, 30). Cornelis Bruinvisch (on whom see 18, n. 6) composed a *carmen gratulatorium*, which was printed alongside the disputation.<sup>29</sup> Hayman matriculated at Leiden University on 10 May 1641, but he returned to Utrecht to defend the disputations *Physiologia* IIa–b in May/June 1641. After his studies — he appears to have graduated abroad — he settled in practice in Middelburg.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> The poem, which is not in AT, is printed on pp. [8–9] of the NLM copy of REGIUS 1640A. The same poem is in the NLM copy of the *Physiologia*, between *Physiologia* IIb and IIIa (published in GARIÉPY 1990, 236–237). Bruinvisch composed a poem for the respondent of the third disputation of REGIUS 1641B, Henricus van Loon, as well (printed behind the text of REGIUS 1641B-III).

<sup>30</sup> *Album Stud. Acad. Lugd.-Bat.*, 323. NNBW, III, 555–556; LINDEBOOM 1984, 799–800.



## Regius to Descartes [Leiden]

20/30 May 1640

*Vie*, II, 55 [A], 59–60 [B], 103 [C] (no. 12).  
AT, III, 71–72 (no. 191).

[A]

Ils<sup>1</sup> jugèrent en faveur de Waessenaer, et adjudgèrent les six cents livres de Stampioen aux pauvres. M. Descartes envoya aussitôt une copie de la sentence à M. Regius en lui marquant l'indulgence des juges, [*i.m.*: Tom. I. des lettr. p. 388.<sup>2</sup>] mais qui nonobstant la douceur des termes qu'ils y avaient employés, n'avaient pas  
5 laissé de faire connaître qu'ils approuvaient tout dans Waessenaer, et condamnaient tout dans Stampioen. [*I.m.*: Lettr. 12 de Reg. MS.]

[B]

Il [Regius] réforma ses thèses sur les remarques qu'il [Descartes] lui avait envoyées, et n'oublia pas surtout d'ôter le nom forgé de *Cartesius*, pour y remettre celui de *Descartes*, [*i.m.*: Page 387 du I vol.] comme il l'avait souhaité. Il lui récrivit le XX, c'est-à-dire le XXX de Mai, pour l'en remercier, et le prier instamment de  
5 vouloir honorer ses thèses de sa présence. Ce qu'il croyait lui | devoir être d'autant 60 moins onéreux, qu'il le voyait sur le point de quitter le séjour de Leyde pour aller demeurer à Amersfort, à trois petites lieues d'Utrecht.<sup>3</sup> M. Descartes s'était offert le premier à ce voyage d'Utrecht, pour l'assister de plus près, s'il en était besoin; et pour entendre même la dispute de ses thèses, pourvu que l'on n'en sût rien,  
10 [*i.m.*: Page. 389 initio *ibid.*<sup>4</sup>] et qu'il pût demeurer caché dans l'écoute ou la tribune de Mademoiselle de *Schurmans*. [*I.m.*: Anne Marie.] M. Regius lui promit [*i.m.*: Lettr. 12 de Reg. MS.] d'accomplir exactement ces conditions, et le supplia de vouloir être son hôte pendant le séjour qu'il ferait dans la ville, ajoutant que les

3 387] 187 *Vie* cf. D/R 13, ll. 82–84

1 The members of the jury in the Stampioen-affair, Golius and Van Schooten Sr (cf. my commentary on R/D 6).

2 D/R 13, ll. 73–79. Baillet's assumption that Descartes sent a copy of the judgement to Regius is based on a misinterpretation of the passage in D/R 13 referred to, see D/R 13, n. 20.

3 There is no other evidence that Descartes had any plans to live in Amersfoort, a city at 20 km north-east of Utrecht. But he may have visited his daughter Fransintgen there, who, according to Baillet, died in Amersfoort on 7 September 1640 (*Vie*, II, 90). If Descartes stayed in Amersfoort in May or June 1640, he quickly returned to Leiden, where his presence is attested for 11 June, 24 June and 31 July 1640 (AT III 88, 93, and ROTH 1926, 137/AT III 753).

4 D/R 13, ll. 81–84.

Fêtes de la Pentecôte avaient fait différer le jour des thèses jusqu'au 10/20 de Juin; mais que, la chose n'étant pas encore déterminée, il aurait soin de lui donner avis du jour fixé pour cela, dès qu'il l'aurait fait afficher.<sup>5</sup>

[C] (in continuation of R/D 12C)

Pour lui [Descartes] faire voir néanmoins que les grands éloges qu'ils [Regius and Æmilius] avaient donnés à cet ouvrage [*Meditationes*] ne devaient pas lui être suspects; ils lui proposèrent [*i.m.*: V. la fin de la letrr. 12 MS. de Regius.] deux difficultés touchant l'idée que nous avons de l'Être infini et infiniment parfait, et lui demandèrent un plus ample éclaircissement à ce qu'il en avait écrit dans son traité. M. Descartes leur accorda cette satisfaction avec plaisir,<sup>6</sup> souhaitant de bon cœur qu'aux éloges près, les Docteurs de Sorbonne fissent le même jugement qu'eux de son traité.<sup>7</sup>

#### COMMENTARY

##### *Date*

According to Baillet, the letter is dated 20 May (OS) or 30 May (NS), which date is confirmed by two notes in the *ExI* (see my commentary on R/D 12).

<sup>5</sup> The disputation (REGIUS 1640A) was submitted on 10/20 June, as scheduled. In 1640, Pentecost — in the Julian calendar — fell on 24 May. The academic Whitsun holiday lasted from 21 till 27 May.

<sup>6</sup> See D/R 15.

<sup>7</sup> This last statement is entirely Baillet's view. In the paragraph preceding the selection of R/D 14C, Baillet quotes the letter to Mersenne, in which Descartes proposes to submit his *Meditationes* for approval to the theologians of the Sorbonne (*Vie*, II, 102–103). The letter in question is, however, of a later date than R/D 14, viz. 30 September 1640 (AT III 184/CM X 116). It is generally held that the *Meditationes* did not receive the Sorbonne's approbation; for a different view, see ARMOGATHE 1994. In any case, the claim on the title page *cum approbatione doctorum* was dropped in the second edition (Amsterdam 1642).

15  
Descartes [Leiden] to Regius  
[June 1640]

CLE, I, 384–385, (no. 81-I).  
AT, III, 63–65 (no. 190-I).  
AM, IV, 57–60; RL, 23–24; CSMK, 146–148; B, 91–93.

Vir Clarissime,

Multùm me vobis devinxistis, tu et Clar. D. Æmilius, scriptum quod ad vos miseram examinando et emendando.<sup>1</sup> Video enim vos etiam interpunctiones et orthographiae vitia corrigere non fuisse dedignatos; sed magis me adhuc devinxissetis, si quid etiam in verbis sentiis que 5  
ipsis mutare voluissetis. Nam quantulumcunque illud fuisset, spem ex eo concepissem ea quae reliquissetis minùs esse vitiosa; nunc vereor ne istud non sitis aggressi, quia nimis multa vel fortè omnia fuissent delenda. [64]

Quantùm ad obiectiones, in primâ dicitis: *ex eo quod in nobis sit aliquid sapientiae, potentiae, bonitatis, quantitatis etc., nos formare ideam infinitae vel saltem indefinitae sapientiae, potentiae, bonitatis, et aliarum perfectionum quae Deo tribuuntur, ut etiam ideam infinitae quantitatis*; quod totum libens concedo, et planè mihi persuadeo non esse aliam in nobis ideam Dei, quam quae hoc pacto formatur. Sed tota vis mei argumenti est, quod contendam me non posse esse talis naturae ut illas perfectiones, quae minutae in me sunt, possim cogitando in infinitum extendere, nisi originem nostram haberemus ab Ente, in quo actu reperiantur infinitae; ut neque ex inspectione exiguae quantitatis, sive 15  
corporis finiti, possem concipere quantitatem indefinitam, nisi mundi etiam magnitudo esset vel saltem esse posset indefinita.<sup>2</sup>

In secunda dicitis: *axiomatum clarè et distinctè intel- | lectorum veritatem per se esse manifestam*; quod etiam concedo, quandiu clarè et 385

2 Clar. D. Æmilius CLE (1663) | Cl. D. F. CLE (1657)

1 A manuscript of Descartes' *Meditationes*. Cf. R/D 12, n. 6.

2 Cf. the Third Meditation, AT VII 45–47/CSM II 31–32. The objection is repeated by Gassendi in the Fifth Set of Objections (AT VII 287/CSM II 200). The divergence of opinions between Descartes and Regius in metaphysical issues surface in these objections. Regius rejects Descartes' notion that the idea of God — or any idea for that matter — is innate. Instead, Regius argues that all ideas, including our idea of God without the aid of Divine revelation, are the product of experience, as in the objection above, or of tradition (REGIUS 1646, 252).

distinctè intelliguntur, quia mens nostra est talis naturae, ut non possit  
 25 clarè intellectis non assentiri; sed quia saepè recordamur conclusionum  
 ex talibus praemissis deductarum, etiamsi ad ipsas praemissas non at-  
 tendamus, dico tunc, si Deum ignoremus, fingere nos posse illas esse  
 incertas, quantumvis recordemur ex claris principiis esse deductas; quia  
 nempe talis forte sumus naturae, ut fallamur etiam in evidentissimis; [65]  
 30 ac proindè, ne tunc quidem, cum illas ex istis principiis deduximus,  
 scientiam, sed tantum persuasionem, de illis nos habuisse. Quae duo ita  
 distingo, ut persuasio sit, cum superest aliqua ratio quae nos possit ad  
 dubitandum impellere; scientia vero sit persuasio à ratione tam forti, ut  
 nullâ unquam fortiore concuti possit; qualem nullam habent qui Deum  
 35 ignorant. Qui autem semel clarè intellexit rationes quae persuadent  
 Deum existere, illumque non esse fallacem, etiamsi non amplius ad  
 illas attendat, modo tantum recordetur huius conclusionis: *Deus non*  
*est fallax*, remanebit in eo non tantum persuasio, sed vera scientia tum  
 huius, tum etiam aliarum omnium conclusionum quarum se rationes  
 40 clarè aliquando percepisse recordabitur.<sup>3</sup>

Dicis etiam in tuis ultimis<sup>4</sup> (quae heri receptae, me, ut simul ad  
 praecedentes<sup>5</sup> responderem, monuerunt): *omnem praecipitantiam in-*  
*tempestivi iudicij pendere ab ipso corporis temperamento, tum ac-*  
*quisito, tum innato*,<sup>6</sup> quod nullomodo possum admittere, quia sic tollere-  
 45 tur libertas, et amplitudo<sup>7</sup> nostrae voluntatis, quae potest istam praecip-  
 itantiam emendare; vel, si non faciat, error inde ortus privatio quidem  
 est respectu nostri, sed respectu Dei mera negatio.<sup>8</sup>

3 Cf. the Fifth Meditation, AT VII 69–70/CSM II 47–48, and the Second Set of Objections and Replies, AT VII 125, 141/CSM II 89, 101.

4 We should supply *litteris*, not *obiectionibus* as some translators do (AM IV 60; CSMK, 148; B, 93). The letter in question is lost and does not seem to have been part of the collection known to Baillet.

5 R/D 14.

6 Regius' mechanistic account of (*bona*) *temperies* is outlined in *Physiologia* Ia–b, 4–14 (Appendix, 201–209); cf. GARIEPY 1990, 128–132. His views on judgment and the will in *Physiologia* IIIb, 43–45 (Appendix, 234–236); cf. GARIEPY 1990, 160–161.

7 Descartes' source for the concept of the will's *amplitudo* is the French Oratorian Guillaume Gibieuf (1583–1650). Cf. FERRIER 1973 and FERRIER 1976, II, 'Pour une métaphysique de Gibieuf. Rapports avec Descartes'.

8 Cf. the Fourth Meditation, AT VII 60–61/CSM II 41–42.

## COMMENTARY

*Date*

D/R 15 is Descartes' reply to two letters by Regius. Regius' first letter contained two objections by Æmilius and himself after reading the manuscript of the *Meditationes*. In the second letter (*dicis in tuis ultimis [litteris]*, l. 41) Regius submitted a third objection. Baillet reports that R/D 14 (20/30 May 1640) contained the first two objections of Regius and Æmilius (R/D 14C). This has to be the first letter Descartes reacts to. Regius' second letter is lost; the next letter mentioned by Baillet dates from 7 October 1640, which is obviously too late. We should probably place the lost letter in June 1640. Since Descartes replied immediately (cf. ll. 41–42), D/R 15 must date from the same month.

*Text*

Clerselier printed D/R 15 as the first part of a larger text, which at first sight appears to be one single letter. In AT, the document is dated 24 May 1640 (AT no. 190), and Adam and Tannery need therefore explain the discrepancy between on the one hand Descartes' replying to Regius' and Æmilius' objections on 24 May, and on the other hand Baillet's indication that these objections are found in R/D 14 (20/30 May). They solve the problem by postulating the existence of one or two other letters containing the objections between R/D 12 (5 [15] May) and Descartes' answer of 24 May. Baillet would thus be mistaken: according to Adam and Tannery, in R/D 14 Regius may only show appreciation for Descartes' replies (cf. AT III 72).

Adam and Tannery's conjecture would be plausible if AT no. 190 were one single letter, however, the text presented by Clerselier is an amalgam consisting of (fragments of) no less than five letters. In the commentary on D/R 13, I argued that only the second half of AT no. 190 dates from 24 May 1640. The part between D/R 13 and the first four paragraphs of AT no. 190 which constitute D/R 15, is made up of three fragments dating from 1641, D/R 22, D/R 23, and D/R 27. The only indication for the date of D/R 15 is given by Baillet, who refers to R/D 14 when mentioning Regius' and Æmilius' objections. The sequence of events, therefore, seems to be as follows. On 5 [15] May Regius thanked Descartes, also on Æmilius' behalf, for sending the manuscript of the *Meditationes* (R/D 12C). On 20/30 May Regius returned the manuscript complete with his and Æmilius' notes and two objections (R/D 14C). Shortly thereafter, Regius proposed a third objection, which reminds Descartes that he owed his Utrecht friends a reply to the first two objections as well (D/R 15).

7 October 1640 [NS?]

*Vie*, II, 62 [A], 63–64 [B] (no. 13).  
 AT, III, 202–203 (no. 209).

[A]

Pour revenir aux thèses de M. Regius, nous ne savons ni en quel jour du mois de Juin précisément elles furent soutenues, ni même si M. Descartes y assista.<sup>1</sup> Mais nous savons que leur grand succès déplut beaucoup à Voetius, et que les médecins de la vieille doctrine en murmurèrent un peu. Primerose, l'un d'entre eux, [...] entreprit  
 5 de réfuter ces thèses de M. Regius; [*i.m.*: Narrat. hist. Acad. Ultraj.<sup>2</sup> Item. lettr. XIV de Reg.<sup>3</sup>] et l'on vit paraître peu de temps après son écrit imprimé à Leyde, où il attaquait principalement le dogme de la *circulation du sang*.<sup>4</sup> M. Regius en eut avis dès la fin du mois d'Août, et il prépara aussitôt une réponse à ce nouvel adversaire, qui, non content de l'avoir voulu réfuter, avait jugé à propos de le charger encore  
 10 d'injures. Une conduite si malhonnête lui avait échauffé la bile, et sans songer qu'un homme sage ne doit point pécher par exemple, il avait employé dans sa réponse tantôt l'aigreur, tantôt la plaisanterie, lorsqu'il n'était question que d'une réfutation sérieuse et modérée.

Il envoya cette réponse à M. Descartes le VII d'Octobre suivant [*i.m.*: Lettr. XIII  
 15 de Regius.] pour la lui faire corriger; et il tâcha de s'excuser auprès de lui sur la dureté des expressions, sous prétexte que le style mordant de Primerose lui avait donné trop d'indignation; et de lui faire agréer qu'il eût pris le parti de la raillerie en divers endroits, pour répondre à quelques impertinences de cet auteur.<sup>5</sup>

[B]

Les Curateurs de l'Université d'Utrecht, sollicités par Voetius, Dematius, et quelques autres Professeurs, de remédier aux troubles qu'ils feignaient que les

1 See R/D 14B. There is no evidence that Descartes actually attended the disputation.

2 NH, 15/*Querelle*, 88.

3 Reference to R/D 18A.

4 PRIMROSE 1640.

5 Regius also showed the response to his colleagues Voetius, Dematius and Lyræus, who advised him to confine himself to the issue at hand and to refrain from sarcasm (NH, 15/*Querelle*, 88, cf. R/D 18A). Regius' response, entitled 'A sponge to wipe out the filth of Primrose's reproaches' (REGIUS 1640B), was printed in Leiden by W. Christiaens for J. Maire. In October 1640, the printer Christiaens finished printing for Maire VAN WAESSENAER 1640 (cf. AT III 200), which project Descartes supervised (see my commentary on R/D 6). It seems plausible that Descartes monitored the printing of REGIUS 1640B as well.

thèses et les opinions singulières de M. Regius commençaient à exciter parmi eux, avaient publié une ordonnance pour empêcher d'introduire des nouveautés ou des maximes contraires aux statuts de l'Université.<sup>6</sup> La chose était assez équivoque. C'est ce qui porta M. Descartes à la démêler, et à faire une explication de l'ordonnance des Curateurs en forme de réponse. [*I.m.*: Lettr. 13 de Regius.] | Monsieur Vander-Hoolck, l'un des Magistrats de la ville, qui fut même Consul l'année suivante, [*i.m.*: Pag. 392 du I vol. des Lettr.<sup>7</sup>] trouva cette réponse fort belle et fort judicieuse; et il goûta merveilleusement le dessein qu'avait M. Descartes de laisser continuer M. Regius d'enseigner la Philosophie nouvelle, en se contentant de modérer son zèle, et de réformer ce qu'il y aurait de trop hardi dans ses opinions. M. Regius lui avait envoyé divers petits écrits sur différents sujets de physique, auxquels il avait satisfait très ponctuellement, quoi qu'il fût alors occupé de beaucoup d'autres affaires. [*I.m.*: Lettr. 13 de Reg. MSS.]

64

## COMMENTARY

*Date*

The date of the letter, 7 October 1640, is found in Baillet and in two notes in the *ExI*. The calendar used cannot be determined with certainty, but as both hands in the *ExI* give the same date, it is probably the Gregorian calendar.<sup>8</sup>

*Text*

In AT, the selection R/D 16A from Baillet's *Vie* continues with an additional sentence:

M. Descartes usa de son droit d'autant plus volontiers que M. Regius l'avertissait qu'il y allait de son intérêt. [*i.m.*: Page. 389 tom. I des Lettr.]

I omit the sentence because the letter referred to, D/R 26, has no bearing on Regius' reply to Primrose at all. D/R 26 indisputably dates from the autumn of 1641. Descartes' answer to R/D 16 being lost, his comments on the text of REGIUS 1640B remain unknown.

<sup>6</sup> None of the events Baillet describes seems to have actually taken place (see my commentary). In 1640 the university had as yet no statutes — they were formulated and approved by the Vroedschap in August 1643. They stated explicitly that only Aristotelian philosophy was to be taught (*Resolutiën*, 172, 184). The States of Utrecht refused to pass the statutes unless sections dealing with the *forum academicum*, which granted the university Senate their own jurisdiction, were dropped (*Resolutiën*, 170–174, 195–199). The revised statutes passed in March 1644. Cf. MULLER 1914.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. D/R 28, l. 57.

<sup>8</sup> See my Introduction, *xli*.

*Context**Text A: the polemic between Regius and Primrose*

James Primrose (1598–1659), the son of a Scottish preacher who fled to France for religious motives, studied at the universities of Bordeaux and Paris.<sup>9</sup> In 1617 he graduated in Medicine at the University of Montpellier. Having completed his studies, he went to England and in the 1630s settled in Hull. Primrose declared himself an ardent opponent of the circulation of the blood. He vehemently attacked not only Harvey (PRIMROSE 1630), but anyone who supported Harvey's opinions. Walaeus' disputation *pro* blood circulation evoked a prompt answer by Primrose.<sup>10</sup> Regius sent a copy of his disputation to Primrose, and if this was an attempt to provoke a polemic, it was successful. It took the English physician just six hours to compose a response, which consists of the complete text of Regius' theses, each thesis followed by Primrose's refutation.<sup>11</sup> Primrose wrote a reply to REGIUS 1640B as well, but he had to wait till 1644 to see it published: the ship carrying the manuscript to the Netherlands was captured by Dunkirk pirates.<sup>12</sup>

*Text B*

Of the events related by Baillet in R/D 16B, the following are not recorded for the autumn of 1640 but in 1642: 1. prompted by the academic Senate, the *curatores* publish a decree against the New Philosophy; 2. Descartes composes a response to defend Regius; 3. Van der Hoolck, quite pleased with the response, intends to get Regius to continue his Cartesian lectures. Apart from Baillet, no source mentions a crisis over Cartesianism in the second half of 1640. Nothing was published against the teaching of anti-Aristotelian ideas, nor did Descartes write a response to such a publication. Events reminiscent of these did happen, though, in early 1642. Perhaps the common keyword in both R/D 16 and the letters of early 1642, a 'response' by Regius to an adversary, lies at the bottom of Baillet's confusion. In both cases Regius sent Descartes the draft of a response, in October 1640 his reply to Primrose, and in early 1642 the reply to Voetius (REGIUS 1642).<sup>13</sup>

Adam and Tannery as well as Bordoli point to the troubles relating to Regius' first disputation in June 1640 in order to explain the contents of R/D 16B (see above, p. 46). In his letter, Regius may very well have mentioned the opposition he encountered at the time, but it cannot account for the specific details in Baillet's story.

<sup>9</sup> For Primrose see DNB, 46, 381–382; BLA, 4, 675–676, and SCHOUTEN/GOLTZ 1977.

<sup>10</sup> WALAEUS 1640 (facsimile in SCHOUTEN 1972). PRIMROSE 1640A.

<sup>11</sup> 'Postea D. Le Roy etiam quaedam circa haec ludicra meditatus est, quae mentem meam exploraturus ad me transmisit. Cui eadem die intra horas sex hoc responsum dedi, quamvis eorum quae scripsit probaverit nihil', PRIMROSE 1640B, *Praefatio* (cited from ISRAËLS/DANIËLS 1883, 60).

<sup>12</sup> PRIMROSE 1644. Primrose's life-long battle against the theory of blood circulation is analysed in SCHOUTEN/GOLTZ 1977. For the Regius–Primrose debate in particular, see ISRAËLS/DANIËLS 1883, 60–63; DE VRIJER 1917, 214–215; SCHOUTEN/GOLTZ 1977, 345–350.

<sup>13</sup> For Descartes' involvement in Regius' response to Voetius, see D/R 31 and D/R 33. Van der Hoolck's (negative) assessment of Descartes' outline of the response is recorded in R/D 32A. Finally, in March 1642 the Vroedschap approved the publication of the Senate's judgement of the *Responsio* (REGIUS 1642), which included a ban of the New Philosophy (see my commentary on R/D 37).