

**Doctoral Diploma in Law from the University of Valence  
In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment  
France, Valence, dated June 20, 1617**

*Single sheet of parchment, written in an italic script in thirty-one long lines, names within the text copied in gold, red and blue capitals, text and illumination framed by double green fillets, text framed by a three-quarter border of strewn flowers, butterflies and other insects on a reserved ground with a coat-of-arms at the top (unidentified, but possibly the arms of the student, Balthazar de Remondis), in good condition apart from slight damage between folds, including one small hole. Dimensions 410 x 404 mm.*

Illuminated doctoral diplomas such as this one were proud symbols of the new graduate's place in society. This doctoral diploma in Law from the University of Valence in the Dauphiné in France is copied in an elegant script and includes a very attractive floral border. Illuminated diplomas from Southern France are relatively scarce (none are listed in the Schoenberg Database), and have been less studied than the contemporary examples from Northern Italy.

**PROVENANCE**

1. Written and illuminated in Valence in Southern France, a city in the Dauphiné region (Drôme), drafted by Magister Balthazar Delandes, royal and delphinal notary in Valence, on June 20, 1617.
2. Private European collection.

**TEXT**

Incipit, "Petrus Andreas de Leberon dei gratia Valentiniensis ac Diensis diocesis Episcopus et Comes almae Vniversitatis Valentinae Cancellarius .... Benedictus Varnier, I. V. D. omnibus hoc diploma lecturis salutem in Christo Iesu ... N. BALTHASAR DE REMONDIS ... operam Iuris vtriusque studio dederit ... N. Iulio Pacio consilario Regio huius Vniversitatis primo professore et E. D. Ioanne Le More i. v. d. et dictae Vniversitatis Regis professore ... per E. Virum Magistris Baltazar Delandes Notarium Regium et Delphinatam Secretariumque ... Datum et actum Valentiae in Delphinatu die Vigesima mensis Iuni anno domini millesimo sexcentesimo decimo septimo ...."

This illuminated diploma signifies that the degree of doctor of law from the University of Valence was granted to Balthasar de Remondis on June 20, 1617 in the name of Pierre-André Gelas de Leberon, Bishop of Valence and Die; it was drafted by the notary Baltazar Delandes, and his signature is included at the end of the text. As was customary, the names of the professors who served as sponsor and co-sponsors for the diploma are listed by name: Julius Pacius or Giulio Pace (1550-1635), an Aristotelian scholar and jurist, who studied law in Padua, and then pursued a career teaching at numerous foreign universities including Valence, and Johannes le More (or Jean Le More).

The University of Valence was founded in 1452, by the Dauphin Louis (who was later to reign as Louis XI of France from 1461-1483), who was eager to encourage the growth of the city, then part of the Dauphiné, his domain. It grew quickly during its early years and attracted renowned professors in law, theology, medicine and the arts. In the sixteenth century, Valence was famous for its law faculty, including the Portuguese jurist, Antonio de Govea (1505-1565), who taught there from 1554–55; the French jurist, Jacques Cujas (1522–1590) from 1557-1559, and again from 1567-1575; and François Hotman (1524-1590), from 1562-1568. Prominent students included Joseph Justus Scalinger (1540-1609), Jacques-Auguste de Thou (1553-1617), the historian and book collector, and the jurist Pierre Pithou (1539-1596).

Well into the early modern period, diplomas were, as they still are, foundation documents for a person's professional and social career. A diploma (sometimes called a "privilegium") was a document or license that was primarily intended to allow entrance into professional associations (lawyers, doctors, theologians...). In spite of their importance, there exists no systematic study of diplomas issued by universities during the early modern period.

The historical importance of the surviving Doctoral diplomas from Italian Universities in general, and in particular those from Padua, long neglected in scholarship, is now the subject of considerable academic interest, focusing on a broad range of topics, from their value as historical and institutional sources, to their interest as artifacts, studied for their binding, script and illumination. These diplomas, which survive in both private collections and archives, have been the subject of two important exhibitions with significant catalogues (Baldissin Molli, *et al.*, ed., 1998, and *Honor et meritis*, 2005). The study of diplomas from French universities seems in contrast to have been largely neglected, and would certainly be a fruitful area for future research.

Illuminated diplomas in quarto format, usually illuminated and elaborately bound, appear c. 1580-90 in the Universities of Northern Italy, and continued into the nineteenth century; earlier diplomas were copied as large documents on flat sheets, a tradition that is continued in this French example.

## LITERATURE

Baldissin Molli, Giovanna, Luciana Sitran Rea and Emilia Veronese Ceseracciu, eds. *Diplomi di Laurea all' Università di Padova (1504 -1806)*, Padua, Università degli studi di Padova, 1998.

*Honor et meritis : diplomi di laurea dal XV al XX secolo: mostra documentaria realizzata in occasione del 500 anniversario della fondazione dell'Università degli studi di Urbino*, ed. Ferruccio Farina, Rimini, Panozzo, 2005.

Latouille, Jean-Jacques. *Histoire de l'université de Valence, 1452-2000: entre intention pédagogique et volonté politique*, Paris, Harmattan, 2012.

Nadal, Joseph Cyprien. *Histoire de l'Université de Valence et des autres établissements d'instruction de cette ville depuis leur fondation jusqu'à nos jours, suivie de nombreuses pièces justificatives*, Valence, E.N. Aurel, 1861.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

"*Honor et Meritis*; Diplomi di laurea delle università italiane dal xv al xx secolo," Urbino, Palazzo Ducale, Sala del Castellare. 14 Gennaio-31 Marzo 2006

<http://1506.uniurb.it/mostre/mostra-honoretmeritus.html>

Betty Braaksma, "Padua on the Prairies: How a 17th century *diploma di laurea* brought Enlightenment to Winnipeg" (discussing Manitoba, University Archives, Dysart item 7)  
<http://www.ifla.org/files/art-libraries/braaksma-padua-on-the%20praries.pdf>

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