

From Marnix to Ethics

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Philippe Van Parijs

Chaire Hoover d'éthique économique et sociale, UCL,
Visiting Professor Harvard University & Gasthoogleraar KuLeuven



The Ethical Forum of the University Foundation

I. Free Access to Truth ?

Scientific publication in the Internet Era

(21 October 2002)

II. Go English ?

What language for higher education in 21st century Europe?

(16 October 2003)

III. Free to Speak Out ?

On the rights and responsibilities of academics in the public debate

(25 November 2004)

IV. Cash for Knowledge ?

Ethical Implications of Patenting Academic Research

(22 November 2005)

V. The End of Free Entry ?

Can university admission tests and numerus clausus provisions make higher education more cost-efficient and more socially responsible?

(23 November 2006)

VI. Is Moral Education Passé ?

Is it the university's job to turn students into socially responsible professionals?

(29 November 2007)

**Philippus MARNIXIUS Sanct-Aldegondius [Bruxellanus]
Multilingual Scholar and Freedom Fighter
Brussels 1540 - Leiden 1598**



Marnix's Life



1540
M born in Brussels as son of Jacques Marnix de Tholouse and Marie de Henricourt de Mont Ste Aldegonde

1569
M publishes *De Byenkorf der H. Roomsche Kercke*

1598
M dies in Leiden

1568
M believed to write the lyrics for the *Wilhelmslied*, the Dutch national anthem

February 1575
M helps Nassau found the University of Leiden

July 1583
Nassau leaves Antwerp and appoints M buitenburgemeester

1598
M completes *Tableau des Différens de la Religion*

1553-1561
M studies in Louvain, in Padua and in Geneva with Calvin

April 1566
"Compromis des Nobles" inspired by M, presented by Henri de Brederode to Marguerite de Parme at the Aula Magna,

November 1573
M jailed by the Spaniards

November 1576
Pacification of Ghent master-minded by M

April 1568
M and Nassau flee to Germany

October 1574
M freed by the Spaniards

August 1585
M negotiates the surrender of Antwerp to Farnese and retires to Zeeland

October 1555
Abdication of Charles V Philippe II and Granvelle in charge

Spring 1561
Granvelle first Archbishop of Malines-Brussels

August 1567
Alba arrives in Brussels

July 1572
Nassau arrives in the Low Countries with an army

September 1577
Nassau returns to Brussels in triumph

March 1582
Nassau shot in Antwerp

July 1584
Nassau assassinated in Delft

August 1559
Philippe II leaves Brussels

March 1564
Granvelle leaves Brussels under pressure from Nassau,

June 1568
Execution of Egmont and Hornes

December 1573
Alba leaves Brussels

December 1577
Farnese arrives in the Low Countries

August 1589
Farnese leaves the Low Countries

August 1557
Egmont wins battle of St Quentin

July 1558
Egmont wins

February 1568
Nassau's son abducted in



Brussels in 1572



Brussels in 2005



Any connection between Marnix and the Ethical Forum ?

1. The Freedom Fighter

No room for ethical reflection and debate in the modern sense without the freedom of conscience for which Marnix spent much of his life fighting.

On the significance of the Pacification of Ghent, master-minded by Marnix:
"[The Duke of Alba] attacked the clauses of the Pacification which offered the Netherlanders a free choice of religion. 'I ask you ', he told the ambassador, 'where you have seen a people being permitted to choose in matters of religion, something that not even the king or the pope can do except through a General Council'. He was quite right : nowhere in Europe had any state gone so far as to permit freedom of belief to subjects. The most that had been done, for example, was to permit a limited freedom to certain nobility and the regions they controlled."

Henry Kamen, *The Duke of Alba*. New Haven: Yale U.P. 2004, p. 134

2. The Multilingual Scholar

One of our Ethical Forums was devoted to the issue of language in higher education. Marnix was an exceptional linguist — and an advocate of early language learning. As an accomplished humanist, he knew Latin, Greek and Hebrew. He wrote books in both Dutch and French, and was also able to communicate in German, Spanish and — it seems — English.

He showed how one could be fluent in the idiom of the international academic community without neglecting to write in the vernaculars of one's people(s), and how useful linguistic competence could be both to have direct access to the writings of a distant past and to build bridges between people now alive.

Any connection between Marnix and the Ethical Forum ?

3. A personal moral dilemma of decisive historical importance

Ultimately, ethics is a matter of personal, sometimes very uncomfortable choice. Marnix was a key actor in the decisive event that led to the division between the Southern and Northern Low Countries. His deal with Farnese in 1585 saved the lives of many citizens of Antwerp, but triggered the decline of one of the world's most flamboyant cities and its hinterland, through the exodus to neighbouring countries of a major part of its elite.



In the late XIXth century, after much debate, Marnix was added along with Nassau, at the very end of the row, among the statues surrounding Egmont and Hornes