

Ghent University Library becomes first to contribute books scanned by Google to Europeana

Europe's flagship project for cultural heritage gains more than 30 million pages of new out-of-copyright material scanned by Google for Ghent University Library

27 September 2010 - Ghent University Library today became the first in Europe to contribute public domain works scanned by Google to Europeana, Europe's culture heritage. Readers using Europeana can now enjoy more than 30 million newly-added pages of historical, scientific, anthropological and literary works, from over 100,000 volumes, spanning four centuries, in French, Dutch, German and other languages.

Joke Schauvliege, Flemish Minister of Environment, Nature and Culture and chair of the European Council of Environment is pleased that the unique and large collection of Ghent University leads the way. "I hope that the addition of so many pages to the Europeana database will stimulate the use of this rich cultural heritage material," says Minister Schauvliege. "I applaud the collaboration between Ghent University and Europeana to make this material visible and free searchable."

The Ghent University Library, one of Belgium's largest scientific libraries, has long been an advocate for increased access to information and cultural heritage through digitization. In 2007 the library partnered with Google Books and started work to digitise more than 300,000 books from its out-of-copyright collection.

Sylvia Van Peteghem, Chief Librarian, said: "Our partnership with Google has enabled us to accelerate the digitisation of our public domain collection. We're delighted to be able to extend the availability of these books even further through Europeana and we look forward to adding more works in due course."

Examples of works being added to Europeana

- "Les délices de la Belgique, ou Description historique, pittoresque et monumentale de ce royaume"
- Vauban "De l'importance dont Paris est à la France..."
- "Voyage pittoresque dans les deux Amériques"
- "Travels through Sweden, Finland and Lapland to the North Cape, in the years 1798 and 1799":
- "Nederlandsch bloemwerk"

About the Ghent University Library

Founded in 1817, Ghent University houses many of Belgium's rare and ancient books and manuscripts. Ghent University and its library collection were miraculously preserved during both world wars and the Booktower functioned as a good storage place since the thirties.

The collection houses the richest 17th century Dutch books printed in Flanders, as well as a very comprehensive collection of works on the city of Ghent. The library holds impressive public domain works on religion, law, medicine, history, humanism, philosophy, as well on the civil engineering of bridges, houses, and fortresses. Ghent University Library also offers abundant historical collections on botanics and fauna, fashion and lifestyle—notably with a wonderful collection of ephemera.

The library's generous 19th and 20th century collections pertain to the arts, architecture, literature and overall sciences with many treasures amongst them. The library also boasts a large collection of French works, as classes were conducted in French at the university until 1930, at which point Ghent became the first Dutch-speaking university in Belgium. Today the university counts 32.000 students.

About the Booktower

Henry van de Velde (1863–1957), the famous designer and architect built a concrete tower with a height of 64 meter and the four façades oriented towards the winds of heaven. The building counts 24 floors, of which 4 underground. The whole library—with a closed rack placement—was meant to house 2,500,000 volumes. In 1954 there already were 900,000 volumes, today the tower counts almost 48 km of material of which 12 km is cultural heritage.

The building is a real architectural jewel; the firm, pure, linear design, the lighting, the colours and juxtaposition of materials like wood, marble and metal and the golden cut, give the building an imposing yet tranquil radiation. No wonder the reading rooms are full of students from morning till evening.

Thanks to a private individual who drew public attention to its growing deterioration, and the ultimate support from the University Board the tower will be restored. The whole site will be renovated (finished 2017-2020) and one of the first things that will be done is the construction of an underground repository where heritage material can be stored safely and in optimal conditions. The heritage collection got this special attention not only because of its uniqueness but also thanks to the attention the Google Books program gives it.

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www.europeana.eu

books.google.com

lib.ugent.be

www.boekentoren.be

“Histoire naturelle”:

[“Faunae insectorum Germanicae initia, oder, Deutschlands Insecten \[collectie HN\]](#)

[“Nederlandsch bloemwerk” \[collectie HN\]](#)

Printer Christoffel Plantijn

[“Epistolae familiares” by Cicero, printed in 1577 \[collectie CL\]](#)

[“Ethicae seu de moribus philosophiae brevis...” by C. Valerius, printed in 1568 \[collectie PHIL\]](#)

[“Poemata” by L. Torrentius, printed in 1579 \[collectie AR\]](#)

Architecture:

[“Les délices de la Belgique, ou Description historique, pittoresque et monumentale de ce royaume”: pictures of the old Palace of Justice in Ghent on p151, Gravensteen on p162, the town hall on p165, the opera on page 156, St Baafs on p158, etc \[collectie ACC\]](#)

[“Histoire navale: Antiquités de Dieppe” : pictures \[collectie HIST\]](#)

[“L'architecture militaire, ou La fortification nouvelle, ...” \[collectie MA\]](#)

[“Maison centrale de droguerie” : first selected pictures... \[collectie AR\]](#)

[Vauban “Économistes financiers du XVIIIe siècle”, with amongst other things.... *Projet d'une dîme royale* \[collectie N\]](#)

Entomology etc...

[“Die Völker des Erdballs”: met de hand ingekleurde afbeeldingen \[collectie HIST\]](#)

[“British entomology” : afbeeldingen \[collectie ACC\]](#)

Travelling

[“Voyage pittoresque au Cap Nord” \[collectie HIST\]](#)

[“Voyage pittoresque dans les deux Amériques” \[collectie AM\]](#)

[“Mahlerische Reise in die Italienische Schweiz” \[collectie HIST\]](#)

[“Travels through Sweden, Finland and Lapland to the North Cape, in the years 1798 and 1799” \[collectie Armelini\].](#)

Ghent

[“De grootboekhouder: Gentsche vertelling” van de Saint-Genois met tekeningen van A.-P. Sunaert \(tevens voorbeeld van een OCR die goed gelukt is...\)\[collectie ELS\]](#)

Curious things:

[“Manual of the system of the British and foreign school society of London”: met echte voorbeelden van breiwerk \[collectie HER\]](#)

[“Misprysinghe ende miserie des hoefs ende der hoocheyt...” : bijzonder lettertype in proloog \[collectie PHIL\], 1573](#)

[“Physicae, seu de naturae philosophia” : bevat handgeschreven aantekeningen Pligt en roeping der vrouw”: lichtjes gedateerd \[collectie PHIL\]](#)

[“Physicae” / C. Valerius, met geschreven aantekeningen in boek \[collectie PHIL\]](#)