

**Doctoral Diploma of the University of Rome  
In Latin, decorated document on parchment  
Italy, Rome, April 10, 1682**

*One sheet, (justification c. 330 x 487 mm.), written in an elegant italic script in thirty long lines, framed on three sides with a gold rule, headings and names in gold capitals, one six-line gold initial, stamp in the lower margin with the initials "S. B." and motto "Elevat Et Illustrat," folded, part of reverse darkened and soiled (equivalent to one folded square), upper margins slightly soiled, seal lacking, otherwise well preserved. Dimensions 447 x 610 mm.*

Doctoral diplomas such as this were proud symbols of the new graduate's place in society. The history of the Roman universities has been a subject of much recent scholarship, making this diploma in civil and canon law from the University of Rome (Studium Urbis) of particular interest to scholars studying the history of education, the city of Rome, and the papal curia. It is a very attractive object (perfect for exhibitions celebrating graduations or the history of script), and is equally of interest to modern calligraphers.

**PROVENANCE**

1. A diploma that was written in Rome and granted on April 11, 1682.

**TEXT**

Incipit, "In Nomine Domini Amen. Gloriosa Studiorum Mater Vrbs Roma Quae inter omnes Mundi Ciuitates celeberrima Scientiarum omnium Studia decorata existit ... Dominus Franciscvs Dionisivs Van der Haghe Gandavensis ... Actum Romae in Gymnasio publico Regionis S. Eustachii Anno a Natiuitate Domini M DCLXXXII ... die uero Decima Mensis Aprilis ... Praesentibus Exc. DD. Bernardo Zoetaert Gandensi et Petro Cardon Gandauensi ... testibus ad Singula uocatis atque rogatis. [signed below by Antonius Palutius and Julius Caesar Fagnanus, Aduocatus and Pronotarius]. Ego inscriptus predicti Celeberrimi Collegii ... Priuilegium subscripsi et publicauit meoque solito signo signauit hac die 11 Mensis Aprilis 1682. In fidem omnium praemissorum rogatus et requisitus [signed below by Sebastianus Baldinus, the College Secretary]."

This large, elegantly written diploma was granted by the University of Rome to Franciscus Dionysius Van der Haghe, a student from Ghent, for a doctorate in Civil and Canon Law. As was customary, the names of the professors who served as sponsor and co-sponsors for the diploma are listed, "Bernardo Zoetaert Gandensi" and "Petro Cardon Gandavensis." A Bernardus II Zoetaert was the Abbot of the Cistercian monastery of Bodeloo (Baudelo, or Boudelo), near Sint-Niklaas in the Netherlands; he died in 1709 (*Gallia Christiana*, vol. v, 1877, p. 219), when he was 60, and he could have been the same Bernardus Zoetaert of Ghent who sponsored this diploma in 1682. The diploma is signed by Antonius Palutius and Julius Caesar Fagnanus, and by Sebastianus Baldinus of the Roman Curia, the College Secretary.

The University of Rome or the *Studium Urbis*, literally, the University of the City, as it was known in the Middle Ages (today the Università degli Studi de Roma "La Sapienza"), was founded in 1303 by Boniface VIII as a faculty of Theology with close ties to the Papacy. By the fifteenth century it included four faculties (Law, Medicine, Philosophy, and Theology), and it boasted famous scholars including George Trebizond and Lorenzo Valla among its faculty. Its history

has been the subject of considerable recent scholarship, including studies examining its relationship with the Studium Romanae Curiae (the University of the Roman Curia) (Cherubini, 1992; Schwarz, 2013). No longer under Papal control, today it is one of the largest universities in the world.

Doctoral diplomas from Italian universities, long neglected in scholarship, are 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 (Farina, 2005). Diplomas from the University of Padua have been particularly well studied (Baldissin Molli, 1998; Mariana Canova, 1999). Diplomas from Rome, in contrast, have yet to be systematically examined in the scholarly literature.

Here we have an example of a diploma copied as a large document on a flat sheet. This is of interest because in Northern Italy, including Padua, diplomas in quarto format, usually illuminated and elaborately bound, replaced the earlier flat sheets by c. 1580-90. Both formats seem to have been used at the University of Rome in the seventeenth century; see for example, Rome, Biblioteca nazionale centrale Vittorio Emanuele II, S. Maria in Traspontina, Traspontina 47, a law diploma from 1640 with six folios, 215 x 150 mm., and Rome, Biblioteca nazionale centrale Vittorio Emanuele II, Vitt. Em.791, a 1592 diploma in Philosophy and Medicine, twelve folios, 238 x 195 mm.).

## LITERATURE

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Chambers, David. "Studia Urbis and *gabella studii*: The University of Rome in the Fifteenth Century" in *Essays in the Honor of P. O. Kristeller*, ed. C. Clough, Manchester, 1976, pp. 68-100.

Cherubini, Paolo, ed. *Roma e lo studium urbis : spazio urbano e cultura dal quattro al seicento ; Atti del convegno Roma, 7-10 giugno 1989*, Rome, 1992.

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Grendler, Paul F. *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, Baltimore, 2002.

Mariani Canova, Giordana, Giovanna Baldissin Molli and Federica Toniolo. *La Miniatura a Padova dal Medioevo al Settecento*. Modena, 1999, pp. 423-428, cat. nos. 80-185 and pp. 533-543, Giovanna Baldissin Molli. "La tarda miniature."

Renazzi, Filippo Maria. *Storia dell'Università degli studi di Roma : detta comunemente La sapienza che contiene anche un saggio storico della letteratura romana dal principio del secolo XIII sino al declinare del secolo XVIII*, Rome, 1803-1806.

Schwarz, Brigide. *Kuriuniversität und stadtrömische Universität von ca. 1300 bis 1471*, Leiden, 2013.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

History of the University of Rome, La Sapienza  
<http://en.uniroma1.it/sapienza/about-us/our-history>

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>  
TM 715