

BERICHT  
 VAN EEN NIEWE KONST,  
*genaemt*  
 DE SPREECKONST:

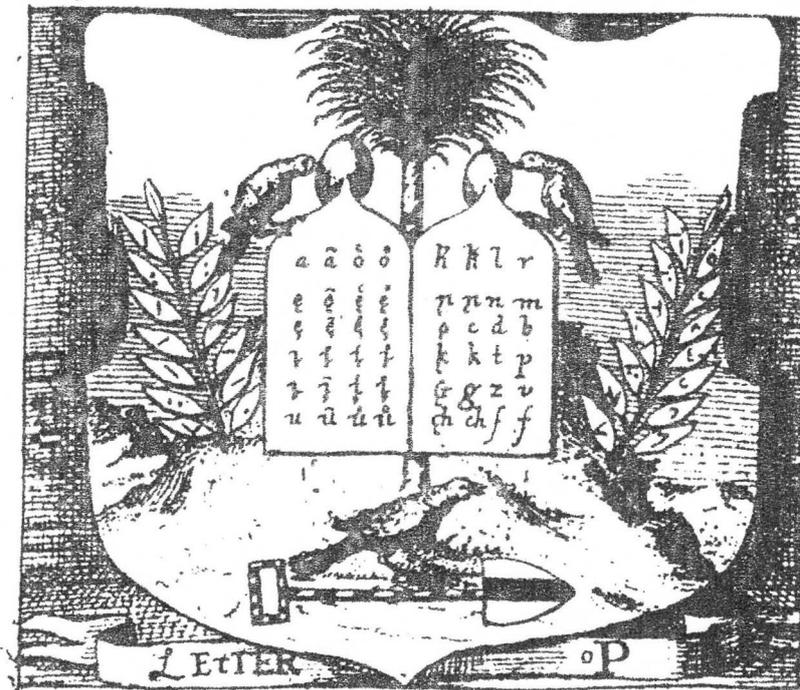
*ontdekt ende beschreeven door*

PETRUS MONTANUS van DELFT,

Bedienaer van Goots Woort inden Niewen Hoorn.

VVaer in verhandelt ende in't licht gebracht wort, den rechten en  
 rot nuu toe verborgen aert van alle uitspraec : als met naemen, vande  
 Oude ende veel Nieuwe Letteren, vande Woordleeden, Woorden,  
 Reedenfneen, Reedenleeden, ende Reedenen :

*Zeer nut ende dienstich voor alle Mensen, en in't byzonder voor alle gemeene School-  
 meesters, Taalmeesters en die Taalen leeren, Dichters, die inde Logica en Physica lesse bibben, Geneef-  
 meesters, en Ouders, als inde Inleiding wort getoont : daer in ooc eenige noodige stucken  
 vande SPRAEC-ALERCCKONST beschreeven sijn.*



Letter op wat vreemde vruchten  
 Deez' gedelbden Berch hier geeft :  
 Ploetse, smaeclse, wilt niet duchten  
 Dat daer aen quae naesmaec cleeft.

Maer gelijk de Paepgaejen  
 Hier door crijgen Mensen-schijn :  
 Zoo zult gy ooc zeer verfraejen.  
 En Goots beelt gelijker sijn.

Tot Delft, Gedruet by Jan Pieterse Vaalpot, by's Stadthuys inde Druckerij, 1635

THE FIRST DUTCH PHONETICIAN

PETRUS MONTANUS (1595 - 1638)

G.L. Meinsma

This year we commemorate the publication of the first Dutch study on phonetics. In 1635 Petrus Montanus published his book entitled: Bericht van een Nieuwe Konst, genaemt De Spreeckonst etc., Delft 1635 (Communication about a New Art; the Art of Speaking).

In the Netherlands Montanus' book remained obscure for a long time. One reason is the fact that he presents his material as if it were a botanical flora by sticking to a rigorous system. International recognition was hampered, because of his book being written in Dutch instead of in Latin. A Dutch furthermore which is very difficult to read because of its many neologisms. Apart from this, even for Dutch readers Montanus' book is a hard nut to crack. Vos (1962) who devoted an up to now unpublished Ph.D. thesis at Edinburgh University to Montanus, indicated that Montanus introduced about 600 new terms in his book. However, Montanus writes in a period in which the language is groping for new terms. The mathematician Simon Stevin who began to publish his work about 400 years ago also made use of many neologisms. Many of these are still in use (Dijksterhuis, 1970), but the ones coined by Montanus are forgotten. Original thinker that he was, Montanus never got more than fleeting attention.

Montanus is the first Dutch phonetician. In his book we find a shift of view towards a description of articulation when compared with earlier Dutch grammarians. It is especially Montanus' careful scrutiny of the art of writing which causes this shift of attention. In Montanus' opinion it is essential to have a thorough knowledge of articulation in order to read and to write. To this end he conceived, among other things, a phonetic spelling. Some of the characters he used are reproduced on the title-page of his book. Montanus clearly mentions 'a new art'. Articulation is researched. There is a summing up of the muscles involved. Careful listening is recommended and feeling with the fingertips to find the place of articulation. He underlines

that in the process of speaking listening has a predominant role. What are now known as glides and transitions are already indicated. But he also sees the process of speaking as a continuous (dynamic) process.

The small engraving on the title-page of Montanus' book, showing two stone tables, reminiscent of the ten commandments, does not show the Mosaic law but a sort of phonetic alphabet. This engraving and some parts of the introduction of the book might suggest to us at least some measure of conceit. However, in the era the book was published a certain amount of playfulness was not uncommon however profane this seems to be in this instance in a 'reverend's' book.

And up to a certain degree Montanus had a right to be proud about his work, he designed a new art.

#### REFERENCES

- Dijksterhuis, E.J. (1970). Simon Stevin. Science in the Netherlands around 1600. The Hague, Nijhoff.
- Vos, A.L. (1962). Tradition and innovation in Petrus Montanus' "The Art of Speech" (1635). Ph.D. Thesis, Edinburgh, Ms.