

Rara bibliothecae

The collection of rare books contains early printed books and other rare and valuable books that have been drawn into a separate collection in order to be better preserved, studied and described. The collection includes 48 incunabula, books printed in Western Europe in the 16th century, 16th-18th-century Cyrillic publications, and early publications in the Estonian language (printed up to 1860), as well as books published in foreign languages in the Estonian and Livonian provinces in the 16th and 17th centuries. The collection contains first editions of literary and scholarly classic works, books of great historical and cultural historical importance, outstanding examples of the art of book design and binding, books that have been preserved in a very small number of copies, and also books that have been owned by famous persons.



Thomas More. *De optimo reip. Statu deque nova insula Utopia libellus...* Basel, 1518

Five rare books published and bound together at Johann Froben's printing shop. This is the third and presumably the best edition of Thomas More's Utopia.



J. W. v. Goethe. *Das Römische Carneval*. Berlin, Unger für Ettinger in Weimar u. Gotha, 1789

Goethe's text, describing the carnival he had experienced in Rome, is illustrated with coloured copper plates made after Johann Georg Schütz's drawings. The 250 copies of the first edition of the book became rarities already during Goethe's life time.



Gaius Plinius Secundi historiae naturalis libri... Frankfurt, 1582

This natural history, containing coloured illustrations also made by Pliny the Elder, gathers the knowledge of its time about the man, plants and animals, astronomy, geography, history and arts.



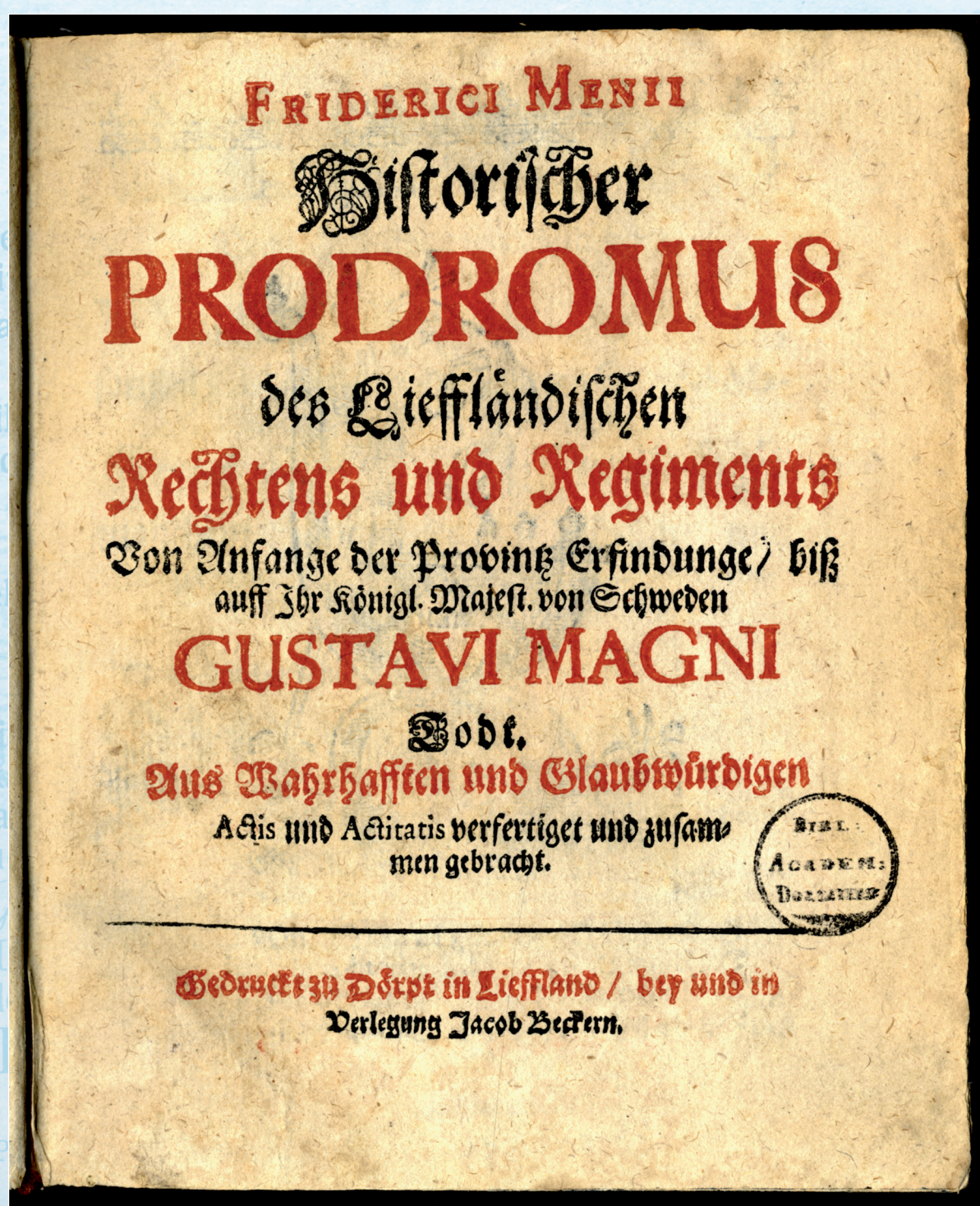
Артикули или дели праве старе крстијанске вере... = Confessio oder Bekanntnuss des Glaubens ... I iz latinскога, немшкога и краинскога јазика ва хорвацки верно столмачени по Антоноу Далматину, и Степану Истриану, Tübingen [Primus Truber], 1562

The oldest printed Cyrillic book held in the library is the Augsburg Confession, published in Germany, which was translated into Croatian by clergyman and reformer Pribus Trumer, who was active on the territory of the present-day Slovenia. Catholicism ultimately won among the Slovenians and Croats, and all protestant literature was to be destroyed. Only very few books were spared from burning and they are extremely rare today.



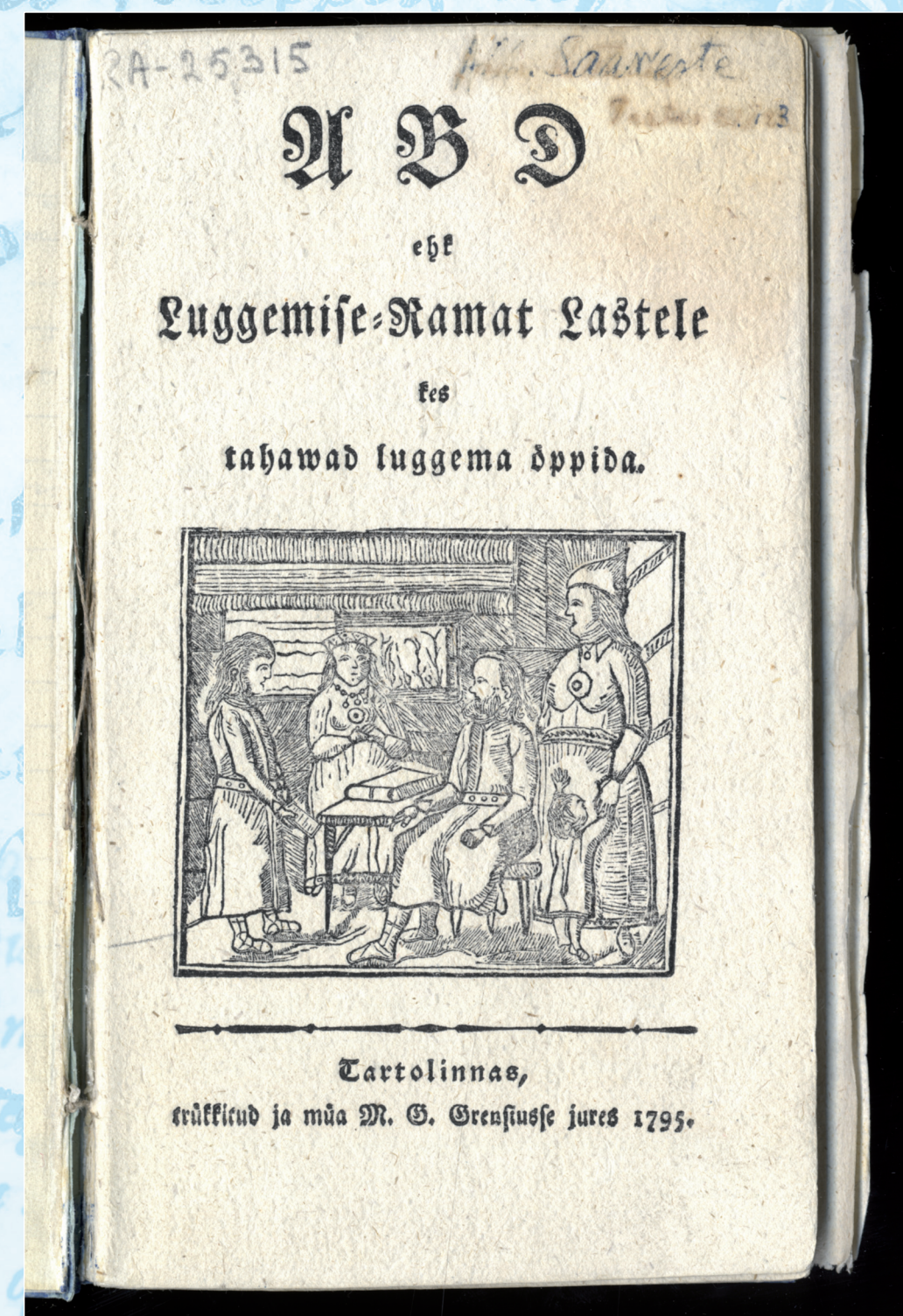
Johannes Portantius. *Livoniae nova descriptio*. Antwerpen, 1573

An Antwerpen astronomer and mathematician, Johannes Portantius, created the first special map of Livonia that has been preserved up to our days. The map was first published in Abraham Ortelius's atlas Theatrum Orbis in 1573.



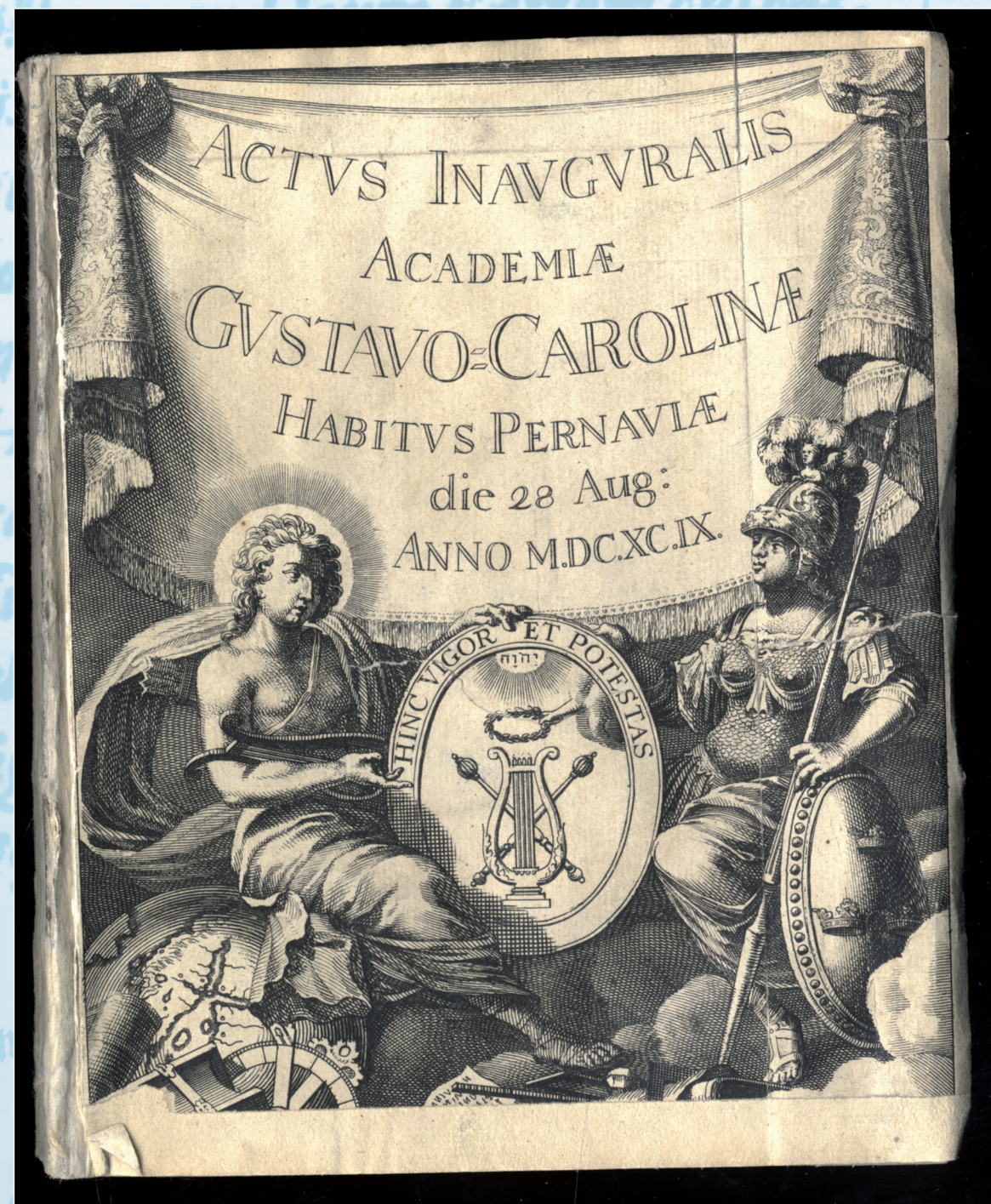
Friderici Menii Historischer Prodromus des Liefpländischen Rechts und Regiments Von Anfange der Provinz Erfindunge, biss auff Ihr Königl. Majest. von Schweden Gustavi Magni Todt. Dorpat, 1633

The oldest Academia Gustaviana printers' shop publication held in the library collections is Friedrich Menius's introduction to a planned volume on Livonian legal history.



ABD ehk Luggemise-Ramat Lastele kes tahawad luggema õppida. (a primer) Tartu, 1795

Pastor, enlightening writer, journalist and linguist Otto Wilhelm Masing compiled the first primer for children that contains, in addition to teachings of commandments and prayers, also some secular stories and guidelines for parents about how to teach their children to read at home.



Actus inauguralis Academiae Gustavo-Carolinae habitus Pernaviae die 28. Aug. 1699. [Pernau] 1700

Due to economic and political calculations, Academia was moved to the seaport town of Pärnu. This publication describes the inauguration of the university in Pärnu.