

15 January 1999

## Press Release

### “Dickhead”, “Moron”, “Twit”, “Prat”

A French editor and publisher has recently been held in police custody, in revolting conditions, for 27 hours on suspicion of historical revisionism. This outrage took place in Lyon; the victim's name is Jean Plantin. In charge of the review *Akribeia*, subtitled *Histoire, rumeurs, légendes*, J. Plantin is known for his exceptional learning and for the seriousness of his work.

The lawmen (henchmen rather) with whom he was faced belong to the Lyon judicial branch, a corps in which inspectors Jean-Pierre Ducros and Damien Baconnier have thus, in a manner of speaking, achieved distinction. J. Plantin was arrested at his home in St-Genis-Laval and taken to Lyon headquarters, where he underwent a strip search. Some officers, seized by a kind of mental and verbal frenzy, subjected him to a torrent of arrogance, contempt, mockery, and insults, alternating between terms corresponding to the English “dickhead”, “moron”, “twit”, “prat” (the list is not exhaustive).

After twenty-four hours' detention J. Plantin was taken back to his home, of which the police then carried out a search, inspector D. Baconnier taking care to leave the editor's books and personal papers in the greatest possible disorder. Also taking part were a young woman, as well as a man who had, for the occasion, made the journey from Paris that same day, apparently on behalf of the interior ministry's censorship bureau, which goes by the improbable name “Direction des libertés publiques” (*sic*). J. Plantin's two computers were seized, along with a dozen or so floppy disks; thus several years of work, research, translation, and editing have been wiped out.

On 14 January, the editor's mother who, at age 75, is director of the *Akribeia* company, was also questioned at police headquarters in Lyon. The same treatment was reserved for the person who manages the property firm at whose address *Akribeia* has its post office box.

The Friends of Jean Plantin have no intention of letting the matter rest there. The police officers and legal authorities who, directly or indirectly, participate in this degrading witch hunt and who, particularly, would refuse, on whatever pretext, to return all property immediately to this remarkable scholar should know that we will hold them responsible for their deeds and behaviour, citing their names and giving precise accounts of their actions, as we are entitled to do by law and by right.

The Friends of Jean Plantin

*This release has been sent to the main organs of the French press, television, and radio. Without delay, please address your own protests to:*

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