

Book Sales Catalogues

of the Dutch Republic, 1599-1800
on microfiche



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A Dutch innovation

During and after the middle of the seventeenth century, the Dutch Republic was the centre of the European book trade. Books which were prohibited in other European countries were published in Amsterdam, Leiden, The Hague, and Rotterdam. A number of Dutch bookseller-publishers became the largest and most versatile of their time, with permanent representatives in the book centres of other countries.

The printed auction catalogue was a Dutch innovation that led to the rapid development of a strong auction system. In Leiden particularly, large scholarly libraries of international repute were auctioned; Amsterdam was known for the auctions of the stocks of the major booksellers; and, especially in the early part of the eighteenth century, numerous private libraries of high-ranking officials, foreign ambassadors, and other collectors of valuable libraries were shipped to The Hague to be sold at auction. Scholars and clerics of the Dutch Republic formed relatively large libraries, and the printed auction catalogues of these collections were used in the Republic of Letters as models, bibliographic reference books, and guides for the location of the best books in the handsomest editions.

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The microfiche project

The objective of this project is to publish a microfiche edition containing as many as possible of the estimated 3,300 surviving catalogues of the book auctions held within the borders of the Republic of the United Netherlands in the period between 1599 (the oldest known) and December 31, 1800. Under catalogues we understand the following kinds of material:

1. Catalogues for auctions of private libraries
2. Catalogues for auctions of publishers' lists
3. Catalogues for auctions of booksellers' stocks
4. Catalogues for auctions of anonymous collections

Furthermore, some 600 Dutch catalogues of the following types will be included:

5. Publishers' and booksellers' lists and stock catalogues
6. Printed catalogues of private libraries
7. Printed catalogues of booksellers' lending libraries

Although relatively small in relation to the auction catalogues, the scholarly importance of the last three categories

justifies their inclusion. Such catalogues are usually found in the same tract-bindings as the auction catalogues but are if possible even rarer. There are also cases of their being used as auction catalogues when the owner had died. In any case, the relationship between the previously printed catalogues and the final auction catalogue will continue to be of interest to scholars.

A project of this kind can never be completed without the cooperation of a great many libraries. The major collections to be incorporated are: the library of the Dutch Book Trade Association (in Amsterdam University Library), the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel, the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, and the National Public Library of Russia in St. Petersburg. In addition, material will be made available from at least 170 other libraries.

It was anticipated, and has been proved since, that in the course of the project many catalogues hitherto unknown will be traced.

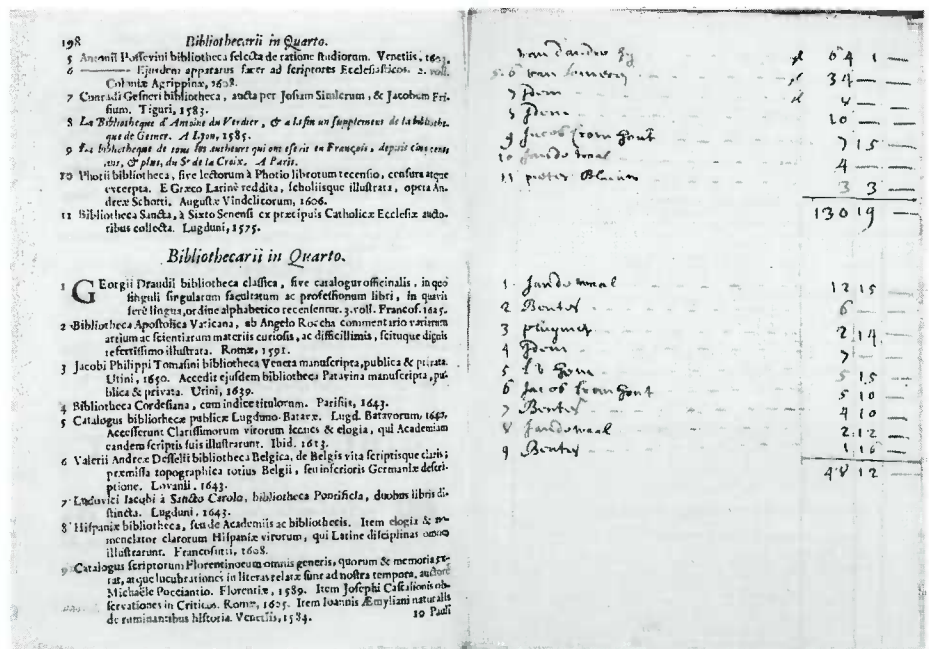


Illustration from: Catalogue of Henricus van der Hem 1674. (interleaved copy).

Auction catalogues as sources

Old auction catalogues are useful to scholars in many different ways. For orientation purposes, reference may be made to Archer Taylor, *Book catalogues: their varieties and uses* (1957, reprint Winchester 1986) and *Bücherkataloge als buchgeschichtliche Quellen in der frühen Neuzeit*, Ed. Reinhard Wittmann (Wiesbaden, 1985).

Auction catalogues are indispensable sources for research on:

The history of the book

Catalogues prepared for an auction of a publisher's list provide information about the titles published and distributed by a bookseller. Stock catalogues and stock-auction catalogues give a picture of the books present in a bookstore at a given time. Like the catalogues of private libraries, they repeatedly make mention of books which have since disappeared. Auction catalogues contain information about the provenance of manuscripts and unique copies of printed books.

The history of libraries

Few registrations of important private libraries of the past have been preserved. Interest in research on book ownership in early modern times is increasing, and the demand for old auction catalogues can be expected to increase strongly.

The history of ideas and literature

More than any other source sales catalogues offer the possibility to determine the degree to which certain titles circulated and became known, as well as the time, place or social class they were acquired in.

The history of art

It was customary to sell art objects at the same time as the books or very soon afterwards. Combined book and print auctions are common. Thus, it is highly appropriate that this microfiche project follows the project on Art Sales Catalogues, 1600-1825. Old auction catalogues often list not only drawings and prints but also have sections on paintings as well as coin and medal collections of variable size.

Research possibilities

In the past, early book sale catalogues have scarcely been used for historical research because of their inaccessibility. Moreover, because they were usually thrown away after the auction, they are

often limited to single copies and hardly ever offered by booksellers. It is typical for this situation that of the roughly 1,700 items printed before 1701, only 140 (11.8%) are to be found in Dutch libraries. Unfortunately, many of the catalogues in German libraries were destroyed during the Second World War. We hope that the publication of this microfiche edition will help to prevent further loss of this kind of information, not least of all because its use will serve to protect valuable old material from wear and tear.

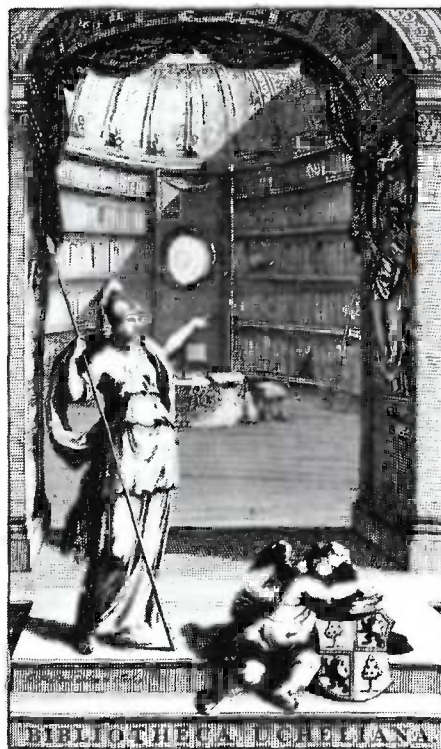


Illustration from:
Catalogue of Paulus van Uchelen 1703.

Finding aids

A complete bibliography of this subject does not exist, but the IDC project will provide an approximation; because it will produce a guide and indexes on a cumulative basis, to be updated with new installments. After completion of the project, the definitive Guide will serve as an indispensable bibliographic tool. The material will then be catalogued by computer, which will produce a chronological *Guide* with an index of booksellers, auctioneers, publishers, etc. For filming, preference will be given to the copy of a catalogue with the most handwritten annotations (e.g., names of purchasers, prices). If a better annotated copy is found during a later stage, it will be filmed as well.

Publication schedule

Because so many libraries are involved in this large-scale enterprise, filming has been organized library by library. The first one filmed holds the largest collection, the approximately 900 catalogues in the Library of the Dutch Book Trade Association (in Amsterdam University Library). This was followed by some dozens of other Dutch collections, among which the Royal Library and the Museum Meermanno-Westreenianum at The Hague, the University Libraries of Amsterdam, Utrecht, Leiden and Groningen, etc. etc. figured prominently. About 600 catalogues from the collection of the Paris Bibliothèque Nationale are being filmed at present and will be issued shortly. Agreements for filming the collections of the Herzog August Bibliothek at Wolfenbüttel and the British Library have been made, and negotiations with the National Public Library of Russia at St. Petersburg are expected to be concluded successfully. In the meantime some 150 catalogues newly discovered in Dutch collections will be added too.

We plan to make the collection available on a subscription basis, in installments of 250 microfiches, with a minimum of one installment per year. Libraries will thus be able to decide whether to acquire one or - if available - more installments in one year.

Price and other information

Scope	3,000 book sales catalogues to be microfilmed in 3-5 years
Size of fiche	105 x 148 mm
Film type	Positive silver halide
Reduction ratio	Varies according to the size of the original
Internal finding aids	Eye-legible headers with title on each fiche
External finding aids	Printed cumulative guide with indexes. The guide comes free with the microfiche
Order number	H-50/1

A standing order can be placed for the subsequent installments of the project.



Illustration from:
Catalogue of Theodorus Boendermaker 1722.

Sample of title descriptions in the guide

1656-03-14 : Heinsius, Daniel : auction cat. private library

Catalogus variorum & exquisitissimorum librorum [...]. [Collection of a Leiden Professor of Greek Language and Theology; printed date: 1655-09-14]. (Location: shop of Pieter Leffen). Leiden: Pieter Leffen, 1655. 4: [2] 136 p.
Amsterdam, BVBBB, Nv 4 [ms. prices; auction date changed in ms.].
Cat. 4. Mf. 2-3.

1681-08-04 : Elzevier, Daniel : wholesale stock auction cat.

Catalogus librorum officinae Danielis Elsevirii [...]. Amsterdam: [the heirs of Daniel Elzevier], 1681. 12: [40] p.
Amsterdam, UL, OK 69-64 [ms. date on title page: '4 Augusti 1681'].
Cat. 851. Mf. 1346.

1700-07-05 : Gruterus, Samuel : auction cat. private library

Bibliotheca Gruteriana [...]. [Collected by a Haarlem minister; cf. 1700-07-16 Gruterus]. (Location: shop of Pieter (I) van der Aa). Leiden: Pieter (I) van der Aa, [1700]. 12: [2] 4, 174 p.
Amsterdam, BVBBB, Nv 59.
Cat. 91. Mf. 141-143.

1700-07-16 : Gruterus, Samuel : auction cat. private library

A catalogue of most excellent, and rare English books [...]. [The English books of a Haarlem minister; cf. 1700-07-05 Gruterus]. Rotterdam: [1700]. 12: [2] 20 p.
Amsterdam, BVBBB, Nv 59 [after cat. 1700-07-05 Gruterus].
Cat. 91. Mf. 143.