

Bongarsiana card catalogue

With the Bibliotheca Bongarsiana, IDC Publishers can now offer you the most significant collection of the Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek Bern on microfiche.

Jacques Bongars was born in 1554 into a protestant family who originally came from Picardy and owned the estates of Boudry and Chesnaye near Orléans. During the period 1564-1571 Bongars attended the schools of Jena, Marburg and Strasbourg. From 1571 he was in Orléans and in 1576 in Bourges (with the scholar Cujas) where he was engaged in philological and legal studies.

Around 1580 he carried out research on the authors of the *Historiae Augustae* and on Eusebius of Caesarea at the library of Fulvio Orsini in Rome and the Vaticana. In 1581 Bongars published an edition of the "Epitome Pompeii Trogi" by Justinus. He visited the famous scholar Justus Lipsius in Leiden in 1584 and gained his friendship.

After 1585 Bongars entered the Diplomatic Service. As envoy and advisor to King Henry IV he travelled extensively to the European courts. For the next 25 years Bongars was to undertake the most difficult and exhausting official duties. Debilitated by illness, embittered by financial need and unjust treatment this extremely cultured man often longed for the tranquillity of a scholarly life.

Finally, in 1610 he was able to retire from the Diplomatic Service, but unfortunately was to die shortly afterwards, in July 1612.

Bongars had a richly assorted library with numerous medieval manuscripts. In his will he bequeathed his library to Jakob Graviseth, the son of the Strasbourg banker René Graviseth, who was one of his closest friends.

In 1624 Jakob Graviseth, whose father had already bought the Liebegg estate in the Bernese Aargau in 1615, married Salome von Erlach, the daughter of an eminent member of the Bernese Council, Franz Ludwig von Erlach. Graviseth had the Bernese "Burgerrecht" bestowed on him and as a token of his appreciation he donated the Bongars Library to Berne. However, it was only in 1632, after having overcome various difficulties, that the valuable collection arrived in Berne, where with its approximately 500 manuscripts and over 3000 printed volumes (with over 6000 titles) it more than doubled the stocks of the old municiple library.

According to the donator's wishes, the collection was to be made available to the public. In 1634, Samuel Hortin produced a catalogue classified according to subject, a magnificent work still in existence.

Unfortunately, the original classification was brought into disarray through the total revision of the stock as a result of the rationalisation at the end of the 17th century, at which time the Bongarsiana Collection was integrated with the other stock of the municiple library.

Over the period of 1760-72 Johann Rudolf Sinner published the first printed catalogue of the codices of the Bongarsiana. Consequently, the attention of the academic world was once again directed towards this collection, part of which is unique.

A hundred years later, the scholar Hermann Hagen gave a lasting impulse, in particular to the philological research

of the Bongarsiana, above all with his "Catalogus Codicum Bernensium" of 1875.

In the course of the present century the original condition of the Bongars Library has been restored based on Hortin's catalogue. As a result, the publications have, for approximately twenty years now, been re-assembled into a separate collection. Amongst the publications are bibliophilic rarities such as a Greek edition with an autograph of François Rabelais and a magnificent Renaissance binding which belonged to Jean Grolier (1479-1565).

Margaret Eschler, the curator of the rare books collections at the Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek Bern, has completely re-catalogued the entire collection of the printed books of the Bongarsiana, based on the rules of the Bayrische Staatsbibliothek München. This involved a detailed diplomatic transcription of the titles.

The catalogue contains an author/title section (approx. 13,000 entries) and a printer, as well as a provenance register (with 10,000 respectively 12,000 entries).

All three catalogue sections have been put on film for the present microfiche catalogue for which an accompanying brochure in three languages has been prepared.

Anton Buchli

The collection

The Bongarsiana card catalogue has been divided into 3 parts:

1. The alphabetical main catalogue	14,887 cards	77 microfiche
Appendix-pamphlets	394 cards	3 microfiche
2. Printer catalogue	9,138 cards	17 microfiche
3. Provenance catalogue	1,954 cards	5 microfiche

General information

(including accompanying brochure in German, French and English)

Scope	26,373 cards
Number of fiche	102
Size of fiche	105 x 148 mm
Film type	Positive silver halide
Reduction ratio	Main catalogue, appendix and printer catalogue: 1:22 Provenance catalogue: 1:25
Internal finding aids	Headers with title and eye-legible pamphlet number on each fiche
Order number	BB-1