

# How many roads?

## Chasing books for the national bibliography of the Netherlands

Alex Alsemgeest

The Short-Title Catalogue, Netherlands (STCN) is the Dutch retrospective bibliography for the period 1540–1801. From the early 1980s onwards the database was principally compiled on the basis of library collections in the Netherlands. In recent years the bibliographers of the STCN regularly hit the road in order to identify and describe unknown editions abroad. Some collections, such as the British Library and Cambridge University Library, have been added to the database almost in its entirety. In other libraries, our specialists added only those titles that appear to be absent in Dutch libraries. The national bibliography now holds unique copies of Dutch printed books in collections from Stockholm to Salamanca and from Riga to Rome.

One might question whether these bibliographical itineraries are the responsibility of a rare book librarian. In this paper I will explain why it is worth the effort to actively engage in locating and describing books abroad and why I started to do that in Sweden. Additionally I will show how the bibliographical tradition of the Short-Title Catalogue, Netherlands is an essential tool for all research concerning the Dutch book in an international context, how we can build on that tradition, and why it is not particularly helpful to draw artificial lines between the sphere of the librarian

and the researcher. Ultimately, I hope to show that the bibliographical research generates more than just data: Dutch books in foreign collections are silent witnesses of a shared European history. Identifying these books not only helps us to understand our common past, it creates a powerful network of interconnected collections that strengthens present-day relations between libraries on an international level.

### Beatnik bibliographer

In the poem *Öppna och slutna rum* Tomas Tranströmer describes how every closed space can open up again. Tranströmer uses a metaphor of a man who feels the world with his work like a glove. Once the man laid aside the gloves, his hands suddenly start to grow and blacken the entire room. In the second part of the poem Tranströmer shakes of the dark imagery of the opening lines and creates a spacious ending. From a mountaintop we can see an endless carpet of pine forest and wonder about cloud shadows that are standing still, or moving.

I am not a literary critic and cheerfully admit that I might have misinterpreted the poem for years. Nonetheless, the opening line ‘A man feels the world with his work like a glove’ inspired me to explore the open and closed spaces of my own profession. In my work as a bibliographer for the National Library of the Netherlands I have greatly benefited from a bibliographical tradition that goes back several decades. The tools and techniques that were developed by my predecessors are indispensable in the fields of analytical bibliography and book history. On the other hand, I realized that the methodology and delimitations of the national bibliography severely limited my space of experience.

For several years I worked meticulously within the safe walls of a handful of Dutch libraries and contributed to the ultimate goal of the project. That is, to describe every single book that has been published before 1801 in the Netherlands and all Dutch-language books published abroad. As a young book scientist, it was a valuable

experience to see so many renowned books from the hand-press period and get a cross-section of quite a number of library collections in the Netherlands. In the first years of my career I literally handled tens of thousands of rare books. However, at the end of the day, when I laid aside my white gloves, I wondered about all the books that I didn't see. Senior colleagues all had their stories about unique copies of forgotten Dutch books that they had seen in remote libraries in other countries. Some even mentioned entire collections that were supposed to hold countless treasures, such as the Fagel collection in Dublin, the Herzog August Library in Wolfenbüttel and the Finspong collection in Norrköping. Not bothered by the formalities of project management and blessed with a beatnik attitude, I suggested that we should jump in the car, follow the trail of the books and get some work done.

The difference between a library catalogue and a national bibliography may be all too obvious, it was only vaguely reflected in my stationary day-to-day work as a bibliographer. Books travel and I believe that bibliographers, rare book librarians and book historians should act accordingly. Not only to enhance our national taxonomy of books, but to gain a better understanding of the historical context in which these books were produced, disseminated, used and collected. Books are agents of cultural exchange. They do not end up in specific collections by chance, there is often a historical contingency that explains why we find a particular copy in one collection and not in another.

One might question whether this is the domain of a rare book librarian. Even though it is generally accepted that a present-day librarian is more than just a guardian of collections it is still a giant leap from being an all-round professional at home to being a traveling bibliographer who hits the open road for several months to find unique copies in another country. Yet if we don't do it, nobody will. Scholars will generally have to restrict their research to specific sets of titles, and few libraries other than national libraries have the means and interests to engage in cross-national bibliographical

projects. Obviously adding new titles to the database is in line with the ultimate goal of the STCN, that is, to describe every single book that has been published before 1801 in the Netherlands and all Dutch-language books published abroad.

The question that remains is why I decided to go to Sweden. Dutch books were disseminated all over Europe in the 17th and 18th century, I could practically have gone to any other country. The choice of Sweden was professionally motivated by the beautifully preserved collections in that country, the historical relations between the Dutch Republic and the countries around the Baltic Sea, and the high level of organisation in Swedish heritage institutions. In the same era when the Dutch Republic established itself as 'the bookshop of the world', Sweden would rise to be the dominant power in the Baltic and functioned as a magnetic centre for people, knowledge, books and collections from large parts of northern and eastern Europe. Even though the Swedish book market in itself might have been small, we find evidence of Dutch books that traveled through Hamburg, Prague, Riga and other places before they ended up in Swedish collections.

The historical background would have been enough to justify a bibliographical project in Sweden. However, it would be ignorant to disregard the personal motivation of my book historical itineraries. Sweden has played an important role in my personal life – I sometimes light-heartedly say: ever since I read Astrid Lindgren's *Alla vi barn i Bullerbyn* as a child. Once I got to know the people, learned the language and had traveled from Malmö to Haparanda and back, I knew that the next step in exploring the country would have to be a professional one. Chasing books for the national bibliography felt like the ultimate way to see the endless carpet of pine forest in Sweden, and wonder about the cloud shadows that Tranströmer wrote about. I would start to explore the world in beatnik fashion, feel the world with my work like a glove.

## The Short-Title Catalogue, Netherlands

The connection between my beatnik aspirations and my professional career is the Short-Title Catalogue, Netherlands. I joined the project in 2008, almost thirty years after the first bibliographical record had been entered. Over one hundred Dutch book scientists had lifted the project to great heights in the previous decades. A brief history of the project will illustrate how we can build on the work that generations of scholars produced.

The Short-Title Catalogue, Netherlands (STCN) is the national retrospective bibliography of the Netherlands for the period 1540–1801. Also included are concise descriptions of Dutch incunabula and post-incunabula. The STCN is compiled on the basis of collections both in the Netherlands and abroad. All books have been described book-in-hand, that is, on the basis of autopsy. The database contains more than 207,000 titles and over 525,000 copies and is freely available as a scholarly bibliographic research instrument. The ultimate goal is the description of every single book that has been published before 1801 in the Netherlands and all Dutch-language books published abroad.

The Short-Title Catalogue, Netherlands was initially planned to be published on paper. By the time the project commenced in the early 1980s technology had caught up with the original plans and fortunately the decision was made to go electronic. Eventually this led to a national bibliography that was not a static list of books, but a dynamic database with structured records that could be used to make calculations and generate statistics. Considering the length of the project and changes in technology, the level of uniformity of the records is remarkable.

The project was set up in the 1970s, the first bibliographical entries started in 1982. The focus was initially on processing the collections from 1540 to 1700 of the National Library of the Netherlands in The Hague and the University Libraries of Amsterdam, Leiden and Utrecht, eventually in combination with important

town and provincial libraries, specialised smaller libraries and important libraries abroad. By 2002 the majority of the 16th and 17th century books had been described, and at the National Library a start had been made with books from the 18th century. The project had been running for twenty years now and the question was how feasible it would be to continue the project for another twenty years or so. A master plan was initiated to bring about the entering within four years of 90 percent of all existing monographs, periodicals and pamphlets and 60 percent of ephemeral print material, such as state publications and private occasional writings. At the end of the masterplan in 2009 it was concluded that these goals had been achieved.

The successful completion of the masterplan does not mean, of course, that the Short-Title Catalogue, Netherlands is finished. Regardless of the percentages given above, the question remained where to look for the specific titles that were not yet in the database. Critics spared no effort to point out the lacunas in the national bibliography. Important libraries had been overlooked, certain social groups and literary genres were arguably underrepresented and collections abroad were largely ignored. The core of the criticism was that the massive database of the Short-Title Catalogue, Netherlands was impressive, yet needed further enhancement to live up to its full potential. The problem is not so much that there will always be books that are not yet in the database, but that there are specific areas that are not covered at all. Notorious dark spots that undermine the statistical potential of the database.

It is striking that a large part of the identified lacunas concerned ephemera, such as occasional writings, almanacs, advertisements, cargo lists, lottery tickets, printed stocks, and even, as has been pointed out by others, pre-printed laundry lists. Most ephemeral printed matter is short-lived by nature and will simply have been lost, still there are reasons why some of this material might have survived in libraries outside the Netherlands. Poetry on the occasion of a Dutch wedding that took place in Riga or Stockholm, might

have ended up in the archives there, but obviously not in the Netherlands. Cargo lists were used on board and in destination harbours, so it makes sense that they were left behind there and were never brought back to the Netherlands. The most famous example is arguably the pile of 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch newspapers that are today in the National Library in Stockholm. Swedish diplomats sent them home in the early 1600s where they survived up until this day.

However, it is not only the ephemera that are lacking in the national bibliography. As I found out myself, every research trip to a Swedish library generates dozens of new titles to the STCN. Atlases, Bibles, scholarly publications, literary editions that were produced to be exported, minor academic texts and dissertations that only generated interest in a student's home country, and polemics and topical texts that might have been printed in the Dutch Republic for all kinds of reasons, but were effectively meant for an audience abroad. To understand this process, we need to take in account the larger context.

## Bookshop of the world

The Dutch Republic has so powerfully been described as 'The bookshop of the world'. In the 17th century Dutch printers and booksellers benefited from the rise of the Dutch Republic. Amsterdam became Europe's leading economic and intellectual centre, universities were established in Leiden, Franeker, Groningen, Utrecht and Harderwijk and there was an influx of knowledge, capital and people from the catholic south. One of the most notable immigrants that exchanged Wallonia for the Dutch Republic was industrialist and arms trader Louis de Geer (1587–1652) who would later play a lead role in the Dutch-Swedish relations. Other noteworthy figures that moved up north were printers such as Lodewijk Elsevier, founder of the eminent family of printers and booksellers, and Franciscus Raphelengius (1539–1597), son-in-law of Christopher Plantin and from 1585 the one who was in charge of the branch of the Plantin press in Leiden.

This is of course not the place to give a comprehensive analysis of the Dutch printers and the book market in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, others have done that in great detail. It is however vital to understand that the combined economic and intellectual climate had a stimulating effect on the Dutch book industry. Printers increasingly had the capital and the knowledge to produce high quality books, scholars produced texts that needed to be printed, and book traders could make use of trade lines to all corners of the continent to reach new markets. Several of the well-known Amsterdam and Leiden booksellers were regular attendants at the various international book fairs, others supplied universities and libraries with the latest scholarly publications and some even set up their own network of bookshops in other countries.

Historical relations between Dutch towns and Sweden had existed since medieval times, first and foremost through the Hanseatic League. There is however little evidence of a persistent and well-developed book trade between both nations before the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Merchants and travelers surely brought pamphlets, Bibles, prayer books, maps and navigation guides along, and there must be some archival evidence of traders that sent some books up north, but these were mostly one-off transactions or serendipitous arrangements. To my knowledge there are no records of a comprehensive Dutch-Swedish book trade in the 16<sup>th</sup> century that lasted for several years. This is supported by the number of 16<sup>th</sup> century Dutch books in Swedish collections today. There are in fact very few of them, and the ones we do come across, can easily be connected to practical use. For example early editions of the so called Visby maritime laws (ill. 1), songbooks and almanacs.



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This all changed around the time that Sweden set up an embassy in the Dutch Republic in 1614. Influential Swedish diplomats and agents such as Harald Appelboom and Michel le Blon operated as intelligence officers and gathered newspapers, pamphlets, maps and prints for the nobility back home. From the correspondence between Appelboom and Count Carl Gustaf Wrangel (1613–1676) we know that Wrangel used this information to keep up to date with the latest publications in the Dutch Republic, and in his turn ordered his agents to buy these books for him on the Dutch market. In the collection of Wrangel at Skokloster we find copies of books on construction, shipbuilding, fortification and military history. The production of these books, often with fine engraved plates, required an expertise that was not always available in Sweden at the time.

It was not just the books and information that Sweden imported in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. In its quest to rival other European powers, Sweden tried to attract scholars, merchants and industrialists to the north. Gothenburg was for some time virtually a Dutch city, with notable Dutch merchants in the city council and a grid plan with canals that was designed by Dutch engineers. The shipyards in Stockholm were led by Dutch shipbuilders, architects introduced Dutch classicism in the city, Dutch traveling theatre groups performed at the royal palace and intellectuals as Hugo Grotius and Isaac Vossius entered into Swedish service. Arguably the most important connection was the knowledge and capital that was brought in by the Walloon industrialists, with a lead role for the previously mentioned Louis de Geer. Cannons, capital and industrial power assured Sweden's military successes and the era of great power or *stormaktstiden*.

Around the same time there is a gradual increase of Swedish students in the Dutch Republic. Several members of higher and lower Swedish nobility spent part of their education in Leiden or other academic towns. Leiden-based bookseller Jacob Marcus rented out rooms in his house to German and Scandinavian students.



Title-page of the Swedish Bible printed in Leiden by Jacob Marcus in 1633.



The presence of students from Lutheran countries stimulated him to print a Bible in German in 1631 and one in Swedish in 1633 (ill. 2). A second edition in octavo format appeared in 1635, with dedications to queen Christina and her custodian, Lord High Chancellor Count Axel Oxenstierna, and a year later a third one, which is in fact a reissue of the 1635 edition. The licence in this edition was issued by Oxenstierna and allowed the import of this bible “and other useful books” into Sweden free from duty.

The Swedish Bible of Jacob Marcus is a rare example of a book in the Swedish language that was printed in the Dutch Republic, but it does show that Dutch publishers recognized the Swedish market as potentially lucrative. Against the background of increasing cultural and political interaction it is understandable that Dutch printers and booksellers tried to get a foothold in Scandinavia. From archival sources we know that the Elzeviers, Johannes Janssonius, Arnout Leers, Dirck and Hendrick Boom, Henricus Betkuis and several others engaged in the Baltic book trade in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Traces of their activities can not only be found in archives, but also in Swedish collections today. An example is the case of the well-known printer and bookseller Johannes Janssonius (1588–1664). He had a network of bookshops all over Europe, with branches around the Baltic in Copenhagen, Danzig, Königsberg, Stockholm and Uppsala. The Short-Title Catalogue, Netherlands holds records of over one hundred different Janssonius editions in Swedish libraries already, and no fewer than thirty of those editions are not known in any Dutch library. This number is astonishing, considering that we have not even seen one percent of all Dutch books in Swedish collections. In several of the recorded Janssonius editions, we find contemporary Scandinavian annotations, indicating that these copies were bought in Janssonius shops in Copenhagen or Stockholm, or at the very least, that these copies circulated in Sweden shortly after they were printed. This is of course a vital link in understanding the activities of Janssonius in the Baltic, but a national bibliography like the STCN does not record provenance data or other material aspects of the book.

## A prophecy of non-circulation

So far booksellers play a central role in my essay. There are however thousands of smaller Dutch books and pamphlets in Swedish libraries that were probably not distributed through established book trade channels. Theological pamphlets, period documents and self-published texts that were clearly not intended for a Dutch audience. They might have been printed in the Dutch Republic, often anonymously, but they served an audience abroad. Some of these books were locally famous for a short time and then seemed to vanish into thin air.

One of the best examples of this modest theory of non-circulation are the books of Swedish prophetess Eva Margareta Frölich (c. 1650–1692). Not a single copy of her books can be found in a Dutch library, whereas over a hundred copies have been identified in Swedish libraries. She wrote two dozen theological tracts, published them in German and Dutch, yet apart from a handful of copies in German libraries, her books only survived in Sweden.

Frölich was married to a Swedish colonel and involved in the flax trade business in Riga in the late 1670s when her life took a dramatic turn. She embraced the vision of local goldsmith named Barend Dörchmann that Swedish King Carl XI would one day rule over all of Christianity. She managed to get an audience at the royal court in Stockholm and told Carl XI about the goldsmith's political-theological utopia. The King and his advisors were not impressed. Even though she was considered a lunatic rather than a threat, she was arrested and after a lengthy trial expelled from the country.

As was so often the case with political refugees, divergent philosophers, social misfits and misunderstood prophets in those days, the best place to find shelter proved to be Amsterdam. Eva settled in the area now known as the Jordaan – a quarter with many immigrants from Lutheran countries – and put her prophecies to paper. She had several little booklets printed and sold them from her

residence in Amsterdam. The question is: to whom did she sell her pamphlets? A banished Swedish prophetess from Riga who spread a chiliastic message about upcoming world domination by Swedish King Carl XI: what audience in 17th century Amsterdam could possibly be interested in this? Radical pietists? Scandinavian immigrants? The curious among the local population?

During her Amsterdam years, Eva Margaretha Frölich issued twenty-five books, ranging from broadsheets to lengthy theological treatises. If we take a closer look at the booklets that she had printed we can learn a lot about her sales strategy. The first book she issued, on 29 May 1686, was a songbook that condemned the priests of the consistory in Stockholm. Two weeks later she produced two broadsheets with printed text on both sides. The first one in German, the second a translation in Dutch. The broadsheet described her audience with the King in Stockholm and basically introduced Eva to the public in Amsterdam. Simultaneously she published an announcement of the upcoming Kingdom of God that would be established by Carl XI. On June 22 she issued an extensive justification of her authority as a prophet under the title *Mein und des Goldschmitz Berendt Dorchmans Predig-Ampt*. A Dutch translation of this lengthy treatise followed on June 30. These were all works that Eva had written in previous years, nevertheless she had either seen no option or had no interest to publish them until she arrived in Amsterdam. Within the space of a month and only shortly after her arrival in Amsterdam, Frölich issued works that introduced her to the audience and established her religious authority. Her publication history shows all the signs of a conscious plan that had been set up well before she actually travelled to Amsterdam. It seems as if one specific printer had been busy with the works of Frölich during the complete month of June. She issued six more pamphlets in 1687 and 1688. Three more extensive booklets dealt with Bible exegeses, the other three included vigorous attacks on the followers of the influential Lutheran ministers Jacob Böhme and Johannes Colerus. All booklets except for one were issued in duodecimo format on

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## Hier zijn Prophecy-boekjes te koop.

**D**ie ick upt de geheele Bybel gemaect heb ober de  
Openbaring Johannis ; Du de selfde Plagen / so  
daer in staet / sullen verbult werden : en hoe het sal  
toe gaen met alle Koningen en Potentaten / nu dese Chri-  
stenheyt sal verstoort werden / Jeruzalem gebouwt / en de  
Joden tot het Christelyck Seloof bekeert worden / en een  
Christelyck Seloove in de Christenheyt / die nu in so veel  
dwase Religien bestaet. Ik heb Sweden / en heel Dupts-  
land geprofiteert en tot boete geroepen / en principael Stok-  
holm / Geseu en Hamburg : maer terwyl hare Predicanten  
haer het niet hebben willen geloben laten / heeft God haest  
met haer de straf aengebangen / en verkondige dat na dit  
jaer zwaerder zal komen ; en die op den rechten weeg der Sa-  
ligheyt willen en behouden blyben aen lijf / en ziel / die moet  
van dese boeckjes koopen / en daer na de Bybel onder soeken /  
Godes woort en deze mijne uptelegging geloben / en daer na  
leuen en wandelen / waer toe Christus Iesus de menschen  
raed in de Openbaring Johannis derde cap. 18, 19, 20 vers.  
daer hy seyt : Ik rade u dat gy gout van my koopt / dat  
met vuur doozloutert is ; en witte kleederen die gy aen-  
trekt / dat men u schande niet en siet ; en Ogen-salf / daer  
mede gy sien moogt ; ende nu open doet nu ik aenklippe/  
met dien wil ik het Abondmael houden / ende hy met my.  
Dit is het laetste Genaden-jaer / toekomende Jaer sullen  
de groote Straf-jaren aenbangen ; daerom segt de Geest  
Godes door Paulo aen de Hebreen cap. 3. Heden / wanneer  
gy sijne Stemme hoort / soo verstokt u herten niet / dat  
is de Stemme der Propheten Christi.

Dese Schryft heb ik upt liefde tot mijnen Jesu drucken  
laten / om hem veel Sielen toe te voeren ; en die dese Schryft  
bederft / of upt hoosacrdigheyt scheurt / die geef ik ober in  
de wrake van Gods Pant ; waer booz sich een ieder Christo-  
liebende Siele wachte : sulks bidde ick /

*Eva Margareta Frölich*

low-quality paper. The titles in German were typically printed in a Gothic type, the Dutch translations in a Roman type.

Highly fascinating is that Eva issued a number of prospectuses of two or four pages each in 1688. The titles on the prospectuses refer to larger books that she had written. It appears as if the prospectuses were originally printed on one sheet of paper that had to be cut up. The loose brochures could then be handed out to the public. Furthermore, she had an advertisement printed with the text 'Hier zijn phrophecy-boekjes te koop' (Here are prophecy books for sale) (ill. 3).

This advertisement clearly shows that she did her best to sell her books to a local audience, yet her books did not survive in Dutch libraries. Her name is not mentioned in contemporary Dutch texts, it seems as if her presence in the city didn't exactly stir the water in the Amsterdam canals. The copies in Swedish libraries show no traces of use in the Dutch Republic. In all six libraries where her books are found, the loose pamphlets have been bound together in one or two volumes and carry provenances that refer to the Swedish nobility, with names like Hyzelius, Posse and Carl Gustaf Tessin. It is faint evidence of how Frölich's books ended up in Sweden, but it is a good example of how books that probably never circulated in the Dutch Republic, survive in libraries abroad.

### Book collectors and scientific networks

In the 1750s Pieter Mortier and Johann Schreuder published John Arckenholtz' four volume history of Queen Christina. Based on the lengthy list of subscribers found in the first volume, more than hundred copies of the edition were shipped to Swedish customers (ill. 4). Among the subscribers we find the entire Swedish nobility, university professors, merchants and commissioners. We see the names of Count Bielke, Baron Oxenstierna, industrialist and entomologist Charles De Geer, scientist Olaf Celsius, Bengt Bergius, royal printer Peter Momma and many others. Surprisingly there is only one northern bookseller on the list, Stockholm-based Johann Frédéric Lochner signed up for 'several copies'.



# L I S T E D E S P E R S O N N E S

*Qui ont bien voulu favoriser le débit de cet Ouvrage pendant trois  
Mois que le tome premier en a paru, suivant le Plan qui  
a été publié pour cet effet.*

NB. Les Etoiles désignent les Exemplaires en grand Papier.

## M E S S I E U R S.

### A.

- Aderkäs (*Madame la Générale d'*) à Cassel.  
Adlerberg (*Olave*) Chambellan du Roi de Suède.  
Andrew (*J. B.*) Libraire à Francfort sur le Main pour 9 Exemplaires.  
\* un Anonyme.  
\* Appelroth (*Charles*) Négociant à Stockholm.  
Archinto (*le Marquis d'*) Nonce du Pape à la Cour de S. M. Polonoise à Dresden.  
\* Arckenholz (*Jean*) Conseiller & Bibliothécaire de S. A. S. M. le Landgrave de Hesse pour Sept Exempl.  
Arckstée & Merkus, Libraires à Leipzig & à Amsterdam pour 55 Exemplaires.  
Arrhenius (*Jacques L.*) en Suède pour deux Exemplaires.  
Arvidson (*Nicolas*) Etudiant en Suède.  
Arundell (*Richard*) } en Angleterre.  
Asp ( ) Le Professeur de l'Université d'Upsal.  
Astebourg (*le Baron d'*) Conseiller Privé de S. M. le Roi de Suède.  
Augier (*Daniel*) à Amsterdam.

### B.

- Balguerie (*Pierre*) Agent de S. M. le Roi de Suède pour 3 Exemplaires.  
\* — le même pour 2 Exemplaires.  
Barbault (*Theophile*) Chapelain de S. A. R. de Hesse.  
Barber (*Thomas*) à la Douane à Jarmouth.  
Bart (*Thomas Robinson*) }  
Bart (*Clement Caterell Dormer*) } en Anglet.  
Bart (*Thomas Mofryn*) }  
Bartholomei & Fils, Libraires à Ulm pour 7 Exemplaires.  
Bauer (*J. G.*) Libraire à Strasbourg.  
Beaufort (*Louis de*) Gentilhomme.  
Beeman (*Jean Daniel*) Libraire à Rotterdam pour 2 Exemplaires.

## M E S S I E U R S.

- Benzeltierna (*Laurent*) Professeur de l'Université d'Upsal.  
Berch (*Reinhold*) Secrétaire du Collège des Antiquités de Suède.  
Berckentin (*le Comte de*) Ministre du Conseil du Roi à Coppenhague.  
Berger ( ) Libraire à Rostock.  
Bergius (*Benoit*) Maître es Arts en Suède.  
Berkley of Stretton (*Mylord*) en Angleterre.  
Bernard (*Jean Estienne*) Docteur en Médecine à Amsterdam pour 3 Exemplaires.  
Bernstorff (*le Baron de*) Membre du Conseil Privé de S. M. Danoise & Secrétaire d'Etat au département des affaires Etrangères &c. &c. &c. à Coppenhague.  
Beit (*Thomas*) Elyr. en Angleterre.  
Bibliothèque Royale de Suède.  
\* — d'Upsal.  
\* — de Cassel.  
Bicker (*Mademoiselle*) à Amsterdam.  
\* Bielke (*le Comte Charles Gustave*) Président au Comptoir d'Etat, Chevalier & Commandeur des Ordres du Roi de Suède.  
Bielke (*Comte Thuro Gabriël*) Sénateur de Suède, Chevalier & Commandeur des Ordres du Roi.  
Bielke (*le Comte*) Chambellan du Roi de Suède.  
Blome (*Guillaume Baltazar*) Conseiller privé de Guerre à Cassel.  
Boey (*Tb.*) Secrétaire de la Cour de Justice à la Haye.  
Bohm (*Jean Daniel*) à Amsterdam.  
Bohn (*Jean Charles*) Libraire à Hambourg pour deux Exemplaires.  
Borck (*Frédéric Guillaume de*) Conseiller privé de S. M. le Roi de Suède.  
Bose ( *de* ) Chambellan de S. M. le Roi de Pologne Electeur de Saxe.  
Bourdeaux (*Etienne*) Libraire à Berlin pour 12 Exemplaires.  
\* — le même pour 2 Exemplaires.  
\*\*\*  
Bourgs-

Book trade between the Dutch Republic and Sweden rapidly changed in the second quarter of the 18th century. It is generally accepted that the Dutch booksellers lost ground to foreign colleagues from the 1730s onwards and indeed we rarely come across overseas book trade activities on a scale compared to Janssonius a century before. However, the list of subscribers mentioned above clearly shows that there was still a market for Dutch books in Sweden. So how did these books travel from the Dutch Republic to the north?

Swedish collectors presumably placed their orders either directly at the booksellers or acquired them with the help of commissioners. The 18<sup>th</sup> century mail-order relation of Baron Charles De Geer of Leufsta with the Luchtmans publishers is well-known. De Geer actively studied Dutch newspapers and periodicals and placed his orders at the office of Samuel and Johannes Luchtmans in Leiden. The correspondence shows that the orders included books from a variety of publishers, not only in the Dutch Republic, but also in England. Luchtmans sometimes apologized for the books that he failed to acquire, but in his turn had no restraints to include books in the shipment that De Geer had not ordered, but might appreciate. If he was not interested, he could simply return the books. This back and forth shipment of books was not without risks. The correspondence shows evidence of books that were damaged during transport and in one case Luchtmans mentions an entire shipment that was lost at sea. To reduce the financial risks involved, Luchtmans left transportation in the hands of trading company Jan & Carl Hasselgreen.

A somewhat different story arises from the Bergius collection at Stockholm university. This scientific library was set up by medical doctor and botanist Peter Jonas Bergius (1730–1790) together with his brother, historian and banker Bengt Bergius (1723–1784). They had no personal relation with a Dutch bookseller but relied on their scientific network to acquire the latest scientific publications. Their predominant contact in the Dutch Republic was physician

and anatomist Eduard Sandifort (1742–1814), with whom they set up an exchange that would last for over a decade.

The correspondence that is kept at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in Stockholm reveals a network of agents and commissioners that does not seem to involve one known bookseller. Bergius at first offered to send his books to the pharmacist Adrian Gottlob Schultz at the Rokin in Amsterdam. In a later letter Sandifort suggests to send them to Hendrik Willem Nolthenius, bookkeeper of the Dutch East-India Company. Bergius requested Sandifort to send his packages with the instruction that they contained books or dried herbs and should be delivered to the warehouse of inspector Hans Ekebom in Stockholm.

The examples of De Geer and Bergius illustrate that a declining influence of Dutch booksellers on the international stage did not mean that Dutch books were no longer shipped to Sweden. Trade just followed new paths that are hardly visible in the administration of booksellers. Nonetheless, the evidence is found in Swedish collections.

## Bibliographical itineraries

How can we and why would we translate the book historical context sketched above to a bibliographical project? This illustrative but in no way extensive overview of Dutch-Swedish connections in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century suggests that there must be thousands of Dutch books in Nordic libraries, many of which might not yet be in our national bibliography. One could say that cataloguing these books is the responsibility of the individual libraries. A researcher interested in Dutch books should simply be able to check the Swedish national union catalogue Libris. If you are trying to find one particular book, this may work. But if you want to ask more complex questions or generate data with statistical value, there are some things you need to keep in mind.

First of all, I have yet to come across a library that managed to catalogue all books that they have. These institutions do not exist,

not in Sweden, not in the Netherlands or anywhere else. There are always books that have been overlooked, ignored or swept aside. Sometimes for good reasons, with limited resources you need to prioritize and it is perfectly understandable why one would start with its own national heritage and not with that of others. It will therefore always pay off to work through a collection in a systematic manner. Unexpected findings will always turn up. Even those libraries that have executed vast retro-cataloguing projects in recent years, usually have some boxes left with ephemera, rariora and other difficult or incomprehensible material. It is needless to explain that these are exactly the boxes that I want to see.

Furthermore, the standard of cataloguing and the uniformity of bibliographical records is not always good enough to generate complex statistical information from the database. For most libraries this is not a problem, simply because they do not aim to use their catalogue for statistical purposes. Why would you bother about authority records, edition science, different states and typographical features if your goal is simply to create a static catalogue that resembles the library cards of the old days? Or in a slightly more modern approach: why wouldn't you decide to harvest data and accept the resulting mash-up of issues and editions? There is not exactly a right or wrong in this situation. It is a technical decision about the standard of your bibliographical data that rests upon the ultimate purpose of your catalogue, but it does have consequences for users. If all anonymously printed editions are simply entered with country-code unknown, then there is no telling which books in your collection originate from Sweden, the Netherlands or any other country.

To make a conscious decision about the standard of cataloguing is a first step, however, not every library will have the sufficient book historical knowledge, tools and techniques in house to proceed. How are you going to distinguish between different issues if you have only one of them in the stacks? How do you recognize a fictitious imprint if you don't know about book history? Ultimately

most librarians without a rare book background will simply derive the data from a decent-looking existing record without bothering too much about the correct edition. If you argue that this claim is exaggerated, check any national union catalogue and try to distinguish between different issues of a book that were produced within the same year. I am well aware that I don't do justice to the skilled cataloguers that spare no effort to get their data right, but generally reliability on edition level is not very high in union catalogues.

Finally, even in the rare occasion that all books have been catalogued in a structured and uniform way at the highest possible standards, there is always the metadata trap. We all know that metadata standards diverge from country to country. Despite all efforts to unify national standards, it is still problematic to derive data of rare books without having to accept data loss and corruption. This bold statement is not meant to degrade the progress made on this terrain so far, but as a sincere concern to be extremely careful when harvesting data and blending databases. Specialized databases such as the Short-Title Catalogue, Netherlands derive an important part of their status from reliability and consistency. The fact that every single book has been added on the basis of autopsy and revised by a general editor, guarantees a high standard. A standard you do not want to jeopardize by automated data-uploads that hold the promise of an eighty percent match.

## Linking the Short-Title Catalogue, Netherlands

So much for the stringent and pedant concerns of an old-school cataloguer. I obviously welcome the potential of a linked data universe. For all that matters, linking is a different process than merging. There are thousands of bibliographies, catalogues and other structured lists of books, local and national, on paper and digital, descriptive or analytical, and they all have their own complicated histories and let's not forget, they often serve different goals. Swedish databases comprise an incredible amount of structured data that is extremely valuable for researchers in the humanities and more-

over, they are complementary to our national bibliography. Databases and platforms like Libris, ProBok and Alvin contain exactly the kind of information that is not present in a STCN-record: data on bindings, provenances, book trade, historical context and collection history.

The data of the Short-Title Catalogue, Netherlands has recently been converted into RDF-format, which allows searches with SQL-based language SPARQL. As a result, far more complex searches are possible and the output is much more flexible. One could ask for the number of Swedish authors that published a book in the Dutch Republic between 1625 and 1700. As a follow-up question, you could ask how many of them were female, what genres were most dominant and – at least in theory – also where these books are found today. Imagine the potential if this information could be successfully linked to data on bindings and provenances.

To live up to its full potential it is desirable that the strengths of the Short-Title Catalogue, Netherlands – that is, a comprehensive and undisputed overview of Dutch books up until 1800 – are further developed. As long as there are large collections with unrecorded Dutch books out there, there are unquestionably unique copies that should be entered into our national bibliography. What we should not do is expand the individual title-records and turn them into miniature essays. If we keep records simple, data structured and make use of identifiers, we don't have to. I will give some examples how to combine information from separate structured databases.

In Stifts- & landsbiblioteket i Skara I came across a book of the Dutch philosopher Frans Hemsterhuis. Hemsterhuis is one of the great minds of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and inspired some notable German intellectuals, such as Goethe, Herder and Jacobi. He is not too well known by the general public, and that was already the case in his own time. This may have to do with the fact that his works were not published for a large audience, but marginally distributed in bibliophile editions among friends and admirers. Consequently, if

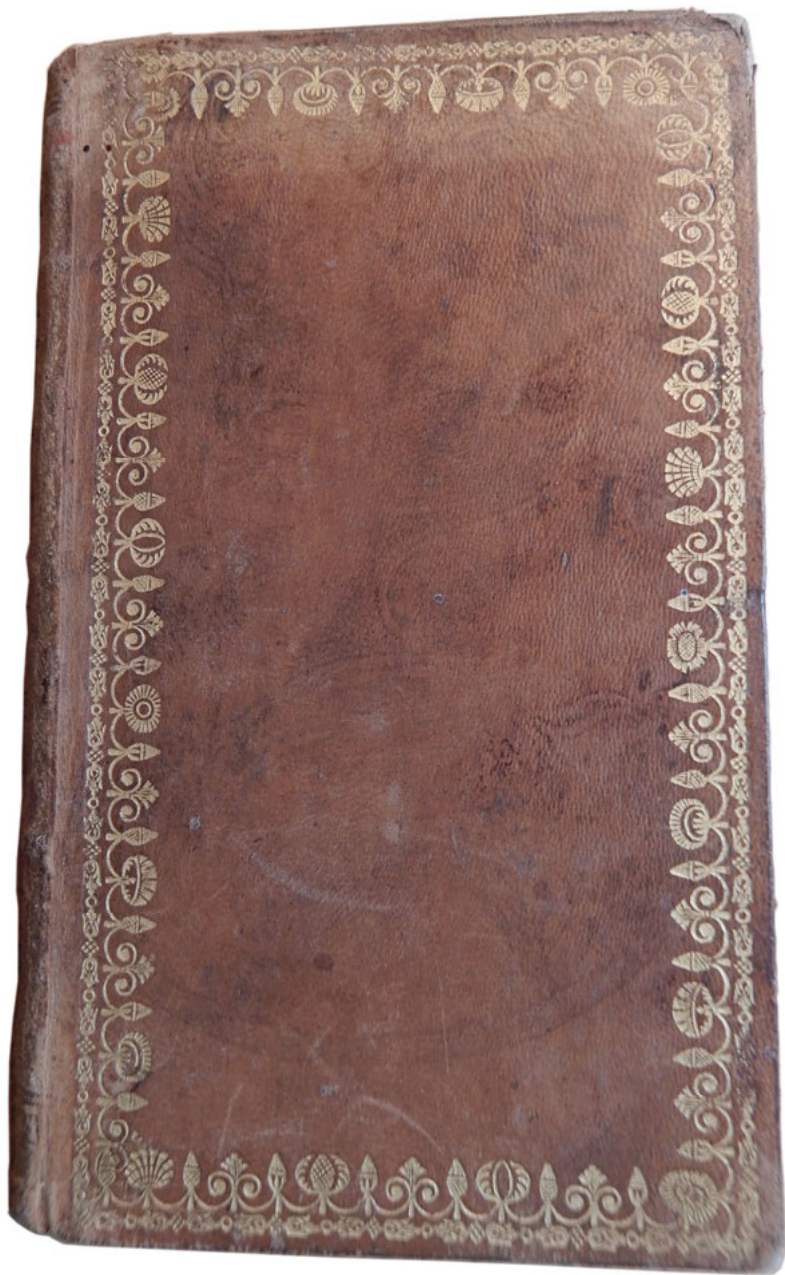
you find a copy of a Hemsterhuis book today, you can be assured that there is a nice provenance connected to it. The question is: to whom did he dedicate a particular copy? The copy that I found in Skara, turned out to be the copy that he had given to Jakob Jonas Björnsthåhl on his travels in the Netherlands. Curiously, in his journal *Resa till Frankrike, Italien, Schweiz, Tyskland, Holland, Ångland, Turkiet och Grekland* Björnsthåhl mentions that he received this exact book from Hemsterhuis. In ProBok I could identify four other books that have a connection to Björnsthåhl, three of them also have a connection to the Netherlands, possibly to the same journey mentioned above. Obviously a database like ProBok gains importance when more books are entered. Yet already as it is, it helps me to jump from one isolated book in Skara to a handful of books that are connected to the same historical event.

Another example comes from the Leufsta collection of Charles de Geer at Uppsala University Library. It has been known for some time that the collection contains several unique editions of printed sheet music from Amsterdam and thus it came as no surprise that many titles were not yet entered in the Short-Title Catalogue, Netherlands. All of the Leufsta titles are obviously available in the Répertoire International des Sources Musicales (RISM), which is the undisputed scholarly source for written music. Now that all sixty Dutch editions from Leufsta have been added to the STCN it is interesting to compare the data in both databases. As it turns out, the information is very different. To some extent they are complementary. RISM provides information on the instruments, while the STCN gives accurate descriptions of the typographical features, bibliographical format and the collation. It is interesting and worrying to see that the dating of the printed sheet music is extremely diverse. RISM seems to be particularly concerned with the initial printing of the music and disregards reissues. This leads to senseless records indicating that a certain work was published years before the publisher went into business.

Connecting databases in a smart and innovative way will even-



Luxury binding of  
bookbinders Micke and  
Van Os, on Hemster-  
huis' *Description philo-  
sophique du caractere  
de feu mr. F. Fagel*.  
Copy: Skara, Stifts-  
och landsbiblioteket.

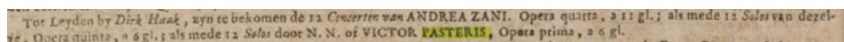




tually lead to enriched data. One title that above all caught my attention was *XII sonate a violino, violoncello o cimbalo dedicate alla ... Anna di Oranges* by an anonymous composer. Former owner Charles de Geer had written the name ‘Pasterus’ on the label that was pasted on the front cover and apparently musicologists worldwide have wondered ever since who that may be. It took me less than a minute and just one smart search in the database Delpher – a freely accessible online research portal that gives access to millions of digitised resources including historic books, newspapers and magazines from The Netherlands – to solve the mystery. In the newspaper’s *Gravenhaegsche woensdaegse courant* of 4 December 1737 there is an advertisement by Leiden-based bookseller Dirk Haak, stating that he has 12 solos for sale by N.N. or Victor Pasteris.

Now I gladly leave it up to the musicologists to find out more about Victor Pasteris, his unsung qualities as a composer and his contributions to musical history, yet the example shows that there is often much more data available than we realise. As long as this data is structured – that is well-formed, standardized, identifiable and preferably in a data format that is exchangeable – we can and we should make connections.

The examples above still largely depend on manual connections, but with flexible data output it would be well within possibilities to automate this process. We could generate a map with all locations where Hemsterhuis books have ended up, or query databases to find out which instruments were dominant in the sheet music copies that ended up in Swedish aristocratic collections in the second quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.



Tot Leyden by Dirk Haak, zyn te bekomen de 12 *Couverture van ANDREA ZANI*. Opera quarta, 2 11 gl.; als mede 12 *Solos van dezelve*. Opera quinta, 2 6 gl. 3 2/3 mede 12 *Solos* door N. N. of VICTOR PASTERIS, Opera prima, 2 6 gl.

Advertisement of Dirk Haak in ‘s *Gravenhaegsche woensdaegse courant* of 4 December 1737.  
Source: Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Delpher.

## Conclusion

Chasing books outside the comfort of your hometown library is inspiring and connecting. Just like zoologists travel halfway across the globe to find new species and enhance the catalogue of life, book scientists should travel to build a taxonomy of books. As long as there are libraries worldwide where a STCN-bibliographer hasn't been, there are Dutch books to add to the national bibliography. Or in the words of Jack Kerouac: "The road must eventually lead to the whole world."

The habits of a beatnik-bibliographer sometimes conflict with the aim and resources of a project though. When I told my colleagues about three rare books in Nordkalottens kultur och forskningscentrum in Övertorneå that would qualify for entry to our catalogue, they shook their heads and asked me in dylan-esque style 'How many roads Alex?'

Compiling a national bibliography is a story of the long tail. The last book that we can add will surely cost us more than we can possibly invest. However, as long as there are collections where we can add new titles to our bibliography by the dozens, we should not hesitate to do that. So far I have added 2500 copies from Swedish libraries to the Short-Title Catalogue, Netherlands. This may seem as a drop in the ocean in a database that contains over half a million copies, yet the Swedish copies represent a distinct part of the Dutch book production: German language editions for the Baltic book market, scientific books with engraved plates that were brought home by Swedish students, pietistic pamphlets and period documents that were aimed at a Swedish audience. As I have tried to sketch in the historical intermezzo in this essay, books are indeed agents of culture. Thus, finding books for the national bibliography not only enhances our database, it reveals a glimpse of our shared history.

Every database in itself is a closed space and that is a positive thing. The quality of the Short-Title Catalogue, Netherlands coin-

cides with the fact that all books have been checked book-in-hand and described by specialists with the help of book historical tools and techniques. The same can arguably be said about other databases. I have given some Swedish examples, but the same obviously applies to other databases worldwide. As rare book librarians, two of our future challenges are to protect the quality of our own data and connect it to the data of our colleagues abroad. We have the chance to learn from each other at congresses and seminars, but true entrepreneurship asks for a more continuous approach.

The privilege to spend three consecutive months in Swedish libraries not only broadens the scope of the Short-Title Catalogue, Netherlands, it also allows me to take my time to discuss with and learn from my Swedish colleagues. Why would anybody travel a thousand miles to find a previously unknown edition? Simply because one book may well open up a whole new world. And I joyfully admit that if new connections help me to work in Sweden, live up to my beatnik attitude, see a pine forest or two and read Tranströmers poetry at a mountain top, I will be the last to complain about the number of roads we need to travel.

## Further reading

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