THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY OF GRONINGEN

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# THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY OF GRONINGEN

Four hundred years of history
in four buildings,
forty collections and infinite pictures

**Gerda C. Huisman**

Groningen
Barkhuis & University Library Groningen
2016

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# PREFACE

**Four hundred years ago, on 28 February 1615, the University Library of Groningen was officially instituted. This book celebrates the four centuries during which the Library matured from a single room with chained books to a modern and busy centre which is an information hub and a social meeting place as well.**

The Library has always been committed to support research and teaching by collecting books, periodicals and other documentary materials, today in digital formats as well. Our digital services make the collections accessible to the widest possible audience, and we keep in mind the enduring importance of the physical collections. It is our duty to preserve this unique academic and cultural heritage for future generations.

We are grateful to Gerda Huisman, the Keeper of Special Collections, for suggesting to celebrate the Library's fourth centenary with a richly illustrated book on its history and collections. She collaborated with a group of students of the University's Department of English. They interviewed present and former Library staff members and Library visitors, commented on the early versions of this text and the book design, and produced a first translation. Frank den Hollander of the Library's Communication Team advised on the text and the illustrations, a multitude of photographs was taken by Dirk Fennema, and Nynke Tiekstra created the book's design and layout. The result is a splendid showpiece for the University Library of Groningen.

This book not only marks the Library's four-hundredth anniversary, but it also appears in a time of many changes. From September 2014, over the next few years the building will undergo a complete transformation. This is another reason why it appropriately focuses on the present-day building and the organisation's long history. The forty collections presented here form a selection of the many delightful, fascinating and rare items in our care. Together they give an impression of the treasures preserved by our Library, a trust which, it is hoped, we will continue to honour for many centuries to come.

Marjolein Nieboer
Director University Library Groningen
September 2014



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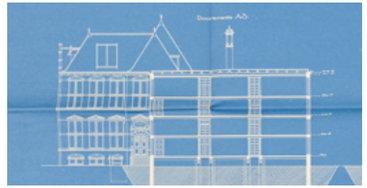
# FOUR BUILDINGS

**A much-quoted wisdom declares that if we want everything to stay as it is, everything will have to change. Indeed, since it was founded four hundred years ago nothing has remained the same in the University Library of Groningen. Almost nothing, that is, because it is the only academic library in the Netherlands that has never moved from its original location. After four centuries it still occupies the block between Broerstraat and Zwanestraat to the north and south, and Poststraat and Oude Kijk in 't Jatstraat to the east and west, right in the city centre.**

Walking around in a building it is easy to forget that, like people, buildings too change during their lifetime. The Library did not always look as it does today, just as today's visitors will hardly recognise the building if they were to visit again in a couple of years. Major renovations of the interior and exterior have just started, and the organisation of the UL's personnel is in the process of being completely overhauled: the Library has a long experience with such developments and it will surely rise like the phoenix from the metaphorical ashes.

The history of the four buildings in which the Library has been housed until today is described in the first part of this book. The starting point is the present building and its appearance in September 2014. From there we will go back to the time of the Library's beginnings in 1615.







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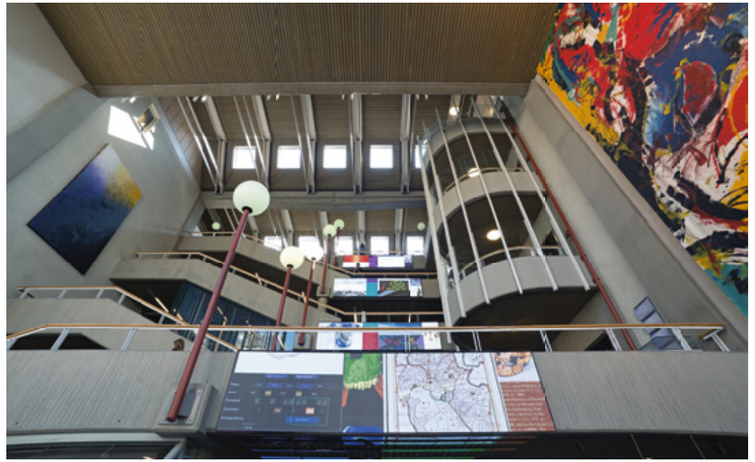
2014-1986

# BROERSTRAAT 4

**The University Library, the Academy Building and hundreds of bicycles parked around and between them have been iconic for the Broerstraat as the beating heart of the University for the past three decades. The Library building was designed by the architect Piet Tauber (b. 1927). The distinctive windows of varying widths are a recurring feature in his work which he also employed in the former Provincial Library at Leeuwarden, now part of Tresoar, the Frisian Historical and Literary Centre, and the ABN Amro Bank at the corner of Groningen's Stationsweg and Hereweg, which was recently converted into the main office of GasTerra.**



The University Library's large glass façade is a real eye-catcher. It provides a view of the central hall with its tall and spacious stairwell, which gradually widens as it ascends. The windows create a harmonious transition between the outdoors and the indoors. Best seen from the windowsill on the ground floor or, by night, outside on the street, is the art installation *SHA_RE*, presented by the Groningen University Fund to celebrate the University's fourth centenary on 23 August 2014. Designed by Peter Musschenga, it visualises the University of Groningen in a dynamic display of thousands of pictures, videos, and texts related to historic and current scholarly research and to its academic collections.

Once inside, it is hard to miss the enormous brightly coloured painting which stretches upwards along three floors. It was created by the Groningen artist Gerriet Postma (1932-2009) at the behest of the University Board, to mark the opening of the Electronic Library in 1997. Postma converted a long room on the fourth floor of the building into a temporary workshop where, standing on a ladder and surrounded by buckets of paint, he covered the enormous canvas stretched out on the floor, using paintbrushes attached to broomsticks.

On entering the Library, one first encounters the Reception and beyond it is the former cloakroom, which is presently being converted into a café. A staircase and lifts lead to the reading rooms and other facilities on the three upper floors. Both the ground floor and the basement are largely used for the storage of books. These closed stacks, accessible to Library staff only, are equipped with moveable shelving units so as to make the most efficient use of the available space. An automated system transports books to their various destinations within the building.

At present, the UL holds over three million books – and provides access to about one million e-books and e-journals – two thirds of which occupy about sixty kilometres of shelves in the Broerstraat building, while the



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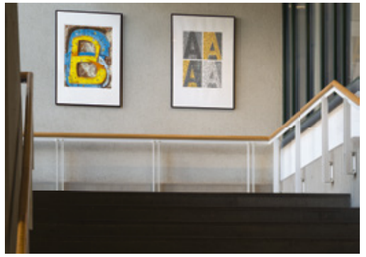



remainder is stored in a repository situated on the Zernike Campus in the north of the city. In addition, several Faculties as well as the University Medical Centre Groningen (UMCG) have their own libraries. In the near future, only three locations will remain: the ones at Broerstraat and in UMCG, and the Zernike Library, the joint Library of the Faculties of Economics and Business, Spatial Sciences, and Mathematics and Natural Sciences.

Taking the stairs to the first floor, visitors can hardly fail to notice two large graphics depicting the letters A and B. The remaining letters of the alphabet are displayed throughout the entire building, ending with Z on the top floor. The series was created in 1986 by twenty six different Dutch artists.

A striking feature of the great hall on the first floor is the atrium with a height of over ten metres. To many visitors this floor is the heart of the Library. Until very recently it was here, underneath the atrium, that the Central Information Desk could be found. Its functions have now been taken over by the Service Desk, formerly known as the Circulation Department, situated at the east side of the hall. Its staff provides information on the Library's catalogues, licences, collections, literature searches, and other services, and it is also the place to collect and return books.

Behind the many doors on the hall's four sides are teaching rooms, a language lab, a career guidance centre for students, and the offices

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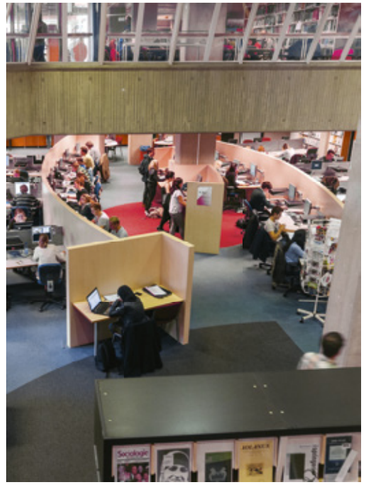



of the various Library departments and teams, such as Document Acquisition and IT, Development and Innovation, the information and collection specialists, the license managers, the project managers and consultants. Regular visitors will recognise the porters, the staff of the Service Desk and of the cafeteria, but many are probably unaware of the fact that the UL employs some 170 people (110 FTEs), without whom catalogues, websites, databases, computer systems, image repositories, *libguides*, newsletters, e-books and printed books could not be managed, designed, filled, purchased, written, maintained, shelved, preserved, paid for, catalogued and made available. The size of the staff is determined less by the ever-expanding collections of printed and digital materials and the steadily growing number of visitors than by the diversity and range of services supplied to the University's staff and students.

Students particularly like to settle themselves in the great hall at one of the many study desks and computer workstations to prepare for their exams, write papers, check their email, and meet up with friends. Part of the room is furnished in a rather austere and unassuming style, while the other half was recently redecorated in a much fancier and more colourful design, a lounge as it were. Spread across four floors the Library offers approximately 1700 seats for readers – more than any other library in the Netherlands – some of which are in carrels, group rooms and quiet spaces, and almost two hundred of them are equipped with PCs. Thus the UL not only fulfills an invaluable academic function but it also plays an important role in students' social lives.

The second floor has two reading rooms with large collections of literature in the humanities in open shelf areas. The Centre for Russian Studies, which focuses on the study of Russia in general and on Russian-Dutch relations in particular, is in the west reading room. From the south windows of this west room, there is a view of the courtyard with a modern pavilion joined to an older building that presently houses the University Museum. This is what remains of the third Library building, completed in 1917 and in use until 1986.

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A huge painting by Rudi van de Wint (1942-2006) adorns the stairwell between the second and third floors. Similar artworks by Van de Wint hang in the plenary hall of the House of Representatives in The Hague. For many years, unnoticed by most, the painting in the Library was displayed upside down, which shows that it is a work that can be viewed and appreciated from all angles. Both Van de Wint's painting and the alphabet series were commissioned in 1986 to fulfill the 'one percent regulation', the obligation to spend one percent of the total costs of a new public building on art.

The largest reading room on the third floor has literature on law and the social sciences, mathematics and the natural sciences, government documentation and genealogy. Old and valuable materials such as manuscripts and early printed books, maps and atlases, letters and archival material, early newspapers and bookbindings can be examined in the Special Collections Reading Room, located at the end of this floor. The spacious landing is regularly used to display items from the Library's collections, or it is made available to professional and amateur artists to exhibit their work.

Just opposite the staircase on the top floor is the Reading Room for Theology and Philosophy. To the left are a lecture room and the Documentation Centre for Dutch Political Parties (DNPP), which records the development of Dutch political organisations, with a focus on extra-parliamentary activities. The most popular destination on this floor, however, is the cafeteria with its terrace offering a stunning view of the western part of the city.

The space now in use as the cafeteria will be among the first ones to be redesigned in the process of renovating the entire building. It will even be given another function when the new café will have been established on the ground floor. Major alterations are necessary not only to bring the technical infrastructure up to date but also to adjust the building to organisational changes. Moreover, in its present condition it can hardly cope with the ever-increasing numbers of visitors. The first plans for a reorganisation were drafted by the University Librarian Alex Klugkist (1990-2010) and these were further developed and supplemented with proposals for the building's renovation by his successor Marjolein Nieboer.

This is not the first time that the Library has been challenged with problems caused by changing needs and circumstances. When

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Wim Koops (Librarian, 1964-1990) welcomed the first visitor to the present building on 6 January 1986, the cafeteria, for example, looked quite different. Already that same year, modifications had to be made to adequately serve its thirsty customers as they were turning up in unexpectedly high numbers. In 1992, the space was expanded by including part of the terrace. New rules demanded the creation of a separate smoking area in 2004, but this section was removed again three years later. On that occasion, the interior was redecorated in the retro style that was to be its final appearance.

Over the past three decades, hardly a part of the UL has escaped adjustments necessary to improve its service to readers. The new Library organisation, instituted in January 2014, will be reflected in the renovation and it will bring significant changes for visitors, staff, and collections alike. For a start, the book collections in the open shelf areas are being reorganised as a consequence of the transfer of Faculty libraries to the main building in the Broerstraat.

It would be an interesting exercise to describe the history of the Library's services by investigating which teams and departments successively occupied which rooms and offices. For example, when the Documentation Centre for Dutch Political Parties moved in in 2003, it was allotted the offices that had just been vacated by the team of Electronic Services. Earlier occupants had been the Expertise Centre for Computer Supported Teaching (ECCOO) and the Department of Audiovisual Media (AVM), their original resident. The room at AVM full of electric typewriters and some word processors was very popular with students typing up assessments.

Until now, the third floor remains relatively unchanged, apart from the move of some open shelf book collections to another part of the room and the unstaffing of the information desk. The second floor has already undergone a metamorphosis. Its eastern half used to be the Periodicals Room, with thousands of titles readily available on the open shelves, often complete sets of volumes or those dating back to the last ten years. As the number of digital journals increased at the diminishment of printed ones, part of the space was fitted out as a set of study areas with PCs to supplement those on the first floor. In 2014, the current printed issues of periodicals were relocated to the first floor, and the Periodicals Room no longer exists, nor does the General Reading Room in the western part: the entire floor now serves as the Reading Rooms for the Humanities.

Originally, the first floor was dominated by row on row of cabinets with the alphabetical and subject catalogues. A few microfiche



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readers were available in order to access the results of the first efforts to computerize the Library's list of holdings. The subject catalogue consisted of filing cards in drawer cabinets, while the alphabetical catalogue was contained in thousands of *Leidse boekjes*. These booklets were named after the University of Leiden, where the system of collecting catalogue slips between loosely bound covers was developed in the late nineteenth century. It was introduced to Groningen by Jan van Haarst (Librarian, 1887-1906). On first opening a volume, all pages seem to be bound the wrong way: they are sorted alphabetically by author's name, but placed from end to front of the booklet with the spine to the right of the text. When trying to find a title, however, the convenience of this method was immediately evident: it allowed for quickly browsing a volume using one's left hand while keeping the writing hand – lefthanders were at a disadvantage here – free for making notes. The covers were fastened around the stacks of slips with strings which made inserting and removing slips – necessary to keep the catalogue up to date – a simple procedure. For this job, a small group of Library employees sat together every morning, assisted by some retired former co-workers enjoying a few companionable and usefully spent hours.

In 1997, when the cataloguing process was fully computerized and the back-cataloguing programme had been completed, these cabinets were relocated to the stacks to make room for an Electronic Library, a study area with over 130 seats offering readers access to digital resources. Today, it is no longer a separate department since the entire UL has gone digital. Another section of the first floor accommodated the Bibliographic Centre, a rich collection of national and international library catalogues and general, subject and personal bibliographies. Created in 1973, it became the starting point for countless students and researchers embarking on new topics because it offered convenient and quick access to scholarly literature on a wide variety of themes. Since such information had become more readily available in digital formats, most books from the Bibliographic Centre were moved to the stacks in 2004.

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The room in the south-west corner of the first floor was originally designed as an exhibition space. Books and other documents from the Library's collections were regularly shown here in expositions often prepared in cooperation with researchers and students. Far away from the main entrance, the location did not help to attract streams of visitors. For this and other reasons the room became a Multimedia Education Centre (MOC) in 1994, which in its turn was repurposed as a study area, part of the 'Learning Grid', in 2013. From 1986 until 1992, a Student-Library with multiple copies of required-reading books was housed on the north side of the first floor. It was replaced by a study area with fifty PCs for the staff and students of the Arts Faculty in particular.

When the building was being designed, a capacity of two million volumes in the stacks on the ground floor and in the basement was considered sufficient to receive acquisitions during the following quarter century. This turned out to be wishful thinking. Within a few years, it became evident that the collections were growing exponentially. In 1999, the conversion of a former clear-water reservoir at the University's Zernike Complex created additional storage facilities. Some years later another floor was added, which by now has almost reached its maximum capacity as well.

On the way to the Library's exit one might notice two inscriptions on the right. The first shows a floor plan of the St Martinus Church that had to make way for the present building, the official opening of which, on 20 May 1987, is commemorated in the second inscription. Though it had already been in use since 6 January of the previous year, the building was not yet complete at that time. According to plan, after the staff and the collections had moved into the 'first phase' of the new building, all the old stacks were pulled down to be replaced by the second part. Some rather unsuccessful structural connections are the only reminders of this necessary phasing of the construction programme. The Dutch Minister

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of Education and Sciences, Wim Deetman, who on 5 January 1983 initiated the construction process by drilling a hole for the first post, had the distinct pleasure of officially inaugurating the completed building four years later.



1986-1917

# OUDE KIJK IN 'T JATSTRAAT 5 – ZWANESTRAAT 33

**During the opening festivities in May 1987, University Librarian Koops must have breathed a sigh of relief witnessing the happy outcome of the long and tedious process of preparation that for many years had taken up so much of his time and energy. All libraries, whether they belong to institutions or individuals, have the objectionable habit of growing continually without a care in the world for the available space. Groningen's University Library began to burst at the seams in the 1960s, a process that only grew worse until it was stopped – for the time being, at least – when the new building was finally completed.**

From the 1950s onwards, like at all Dutch universities, the numbers of staff and students at Groningen gradually increased, and two decades later enrolments unverwent an exponential growth. In 1949, about 2000 students were registered, there were 6000 students in 1964, 16,000 in 1980, and today the tally stands at 30,000. Provisions for the Library kept pace with this trend. More generous funding for the collection development of the UL as well as the departmental libraries – of which there were about a hundred by the end of the 1970s – led to an increase of their combined size from about 850,000 volumes in 1965 to about two million in 1986, over half of which were housed in the UL. Handling the acquisition, cataloguing, circulation, and publication required more and more staff members, while space came at a premium with stacks filled to the roof and office floors and desks covered with the overflow. It became increasingly difficult to reach the intended service level, and in the 1980s even the Main Reading Room had to be sacrificed and was taken over by the Cataloguing Department. Librarian Koops's constant pleading with the University Council for additional storage and office space resulted in the acquisition of four houses on the Oude Kijk in 't Jatstraat and temporary stacks in the Botanical Centre in Haren and at Hoge der A 10, in the city centre. Such scattered locations made the organisation all the more complex and led to a decline in readers' services. In the end, all parties concerned reached the conclusion that the situation had become untenable and that the only remedy was an entirely new building.

The most controversial issue in the negotiations between the University and the City



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Council about a new Library was its location. The University favoured a concentration of library provisions in Paddepoel, a district in the north-west of town, or in the Hortus area – the plot used as the botanical gardens from the early seventeenth century until 1966 – just north of the Broerstraat. The City Council, however, preferred the site of the vacated Catholic St Martinus Church on the Broerstraat. They argued that this location would be much more attractive to the public and that it would generate many activities in the city centre, while they fully ignored the fact that the area was far too small for an efficient building, let alone for sufficient parking space. Long and hard deliberations followed, but finally, in 1978, the Broerstraat location won out. After that it took another two years for the ministerial permission needed from The Hague to come through.

The St Martinus Church had to be pulled down to make room for the new Library. Since 1895, this neo-Gothic basilica, together with the Academy Building, had dominated the Broerstraat. Although the church had not been used for services since 1970, demolition met with great resistance, mainly because of the reputation of its architect, Pierre Cuypers (1827-1921), the famous designer of Amsterdam Central Station and the Rijksmuseum. Attempts to rescue the building by granting it the status of a monument foundered. A scheme to convert it into a library was doomed to fail as well, because the plans proposed by the architect Herman Hertzberger were not only based on false assumptions and incorrect figures but they were also technically unfeasible.








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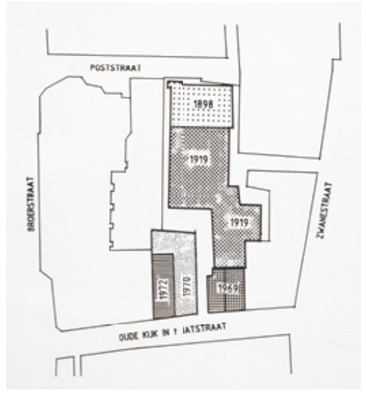


The church was on the plot of land where the Academy Church once stood and within which many professors had been buried. It is an ironic twist of fate that the remains of these staunch Calvinists were exhumed and reburied in the Roman Catholic cemetery in town. The memorial stones of twelve professors had already been removed from the site in 1909 and were stored in the basement of the Academy Building. They are still there but now more prominently displayed in and near the cafeteria. The memorial for Ubbo Emmius (1547-1625), the first Rector Magnificus, occupies a place of honour against a wall in the entrance hall.

The administrative skirmishes were not yet over. A new bone of contention was the neo-Gothic building at the corner of Broerstraat and Oude Kijk in 't Jatstraat, a shop with an upstairs appartment built in 1896 by the Groningen architect A.Th. van Elmpt (1866-1953). The City Council insisted on preserving the corner shop and gave it the status of a protected monument. The ground floor became a bookshop while the upper floors were converted into Library offices. Older UL employees still refer to it as the 'Postzegelpand', the Stamp House. After 1939, when the barber Roelf Berend de Jonge registered his stamp shop there as a second business, the Groninger Stamp Exchange became a well-known destination for collectors in the city and its surroundings.

In 1986, the UL moved out of the building it had occupied for seven decades. Situated between the St Martinus Church, Poststraat, Zwanestraat and Oude Kijk in 't Jatstraat, it was almost fully enclosed on four sides – only a small part could be seen from the Zwanestraat. Consequently, not much public credit had been gained from this commission by its architect Jan Vrijman (1865-1954). Today the south windows on the second and third floors of the present Library offer a good view of the northern facade of Vrijman's building, currently in use as the University Museum. Most of the Library's public rooms and some offices can still be seen there. The stacks used to be located on the east side, and they were joined with a separate four-storey stacks building extending to the Poststraat, that had been added to the

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previous Library building in 1898. This whole section was demolished in 1986 to make space for the second phase of the Tauber Library.

The entrance to the University Museum is in the pavilion at the end of the Catwalk, the illuminated pathway between Oude Kijk in 't Jatstraat 7 and 9. Designed by the Groningen firm of Architectuurstudio Skets, both pathway and pavilion were constructed as part of an art project set up to celebrate the University's 390th anniversary in 2004. Beyond the reception desk is the first exhibition room; a corridor to the right leads to the area which functioned as the Catalogue Room with *Leidse boekjes* from 1969 until 1986. The double doors to the left were the main entrance to the Vrijman building until 1969, when the Library's official address changed from Zwanestraat 33 to Oude Kijk in 't Jatstraat 5. Outside, an inscription above the doors commemorates the completion of this building in 1917. Because it was officially put into use two years later it is usually referred to as 'the Library of 1919'.

The former Catalogue Room continues into what used to be the Circulation Department. One of the staff members who reigned here for decades is still famous among Groningen alumni because of his capacious memory: from their second visit onward he greeted every visitor by name. This room had been renovated several times. The staff celebrated the refurbishments of 1952 with a lively party. The stacks could be reached through a door in the wall to the right. The furthest part of the room used to be a separate office. Behind its

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back wall were more offices in rooms in the houses along the Oude Kijk in 't Jatstraat.

From the 1960s onwards, additional work spaces for the growing staff – their number had increased from thirteen in 1917 to 37 in 1963 and 90 (FTEs) in 1986 – needed to be found. As the height of the offices and reading rooms was twice that of the floors in the stacks, a gallery could be constructed in the Circulation Department for extra desks and bookcases. From here, too, the stacks could be reached, parts of which were no longer filled with bookcases but occupied by the Cataloguing Department, the Bibliographic Centre, the subject librarians and the subject catalogue.

The Deputy Librarian's office was in the room to the left of the hallway just off the Circulation Department. For a long time they were also responsible for the subject catalogue which therefore was set up here until it became too unwieldy and was moved upstairs to the stacks. The mail room, further offices, and technical areas were located on the lower





floor, reached through a door to the right of the main staircase. Behind the door to the right in the hallway is a corridor with steps leading down to the ground floor level of the houses



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in the Oude Kijk in 't Jatstraat. The throughway to the former entrance, offices, and reading rooms in the annexes is now closed.

Atelier Crabeth in The Hague produced the stained glass window in the stairwell. It is undated, but the designer's name is recorded in the lower right corner: Lou (Louis Franciscus) Asperslagh (1893-1949), who was employed by Crabeth from 1917 until 1923, when he started his own studio. The two women pictured in the window are the personification of the University of Groningen, holding a book and a shield with the Groningen coat of arms, and Minerva, goddess of wisdom, with a spear and a shield with Medusa's head on it. Above them are the symbols of the Faculties and an eagle with the coat of arms of the city of Groningen. The panel below Minerva represents an owl, her standard attribute, whilst *Universitas* stands above a hen, the symbol of vigilance and intelligence.

The Librarian's office was on the upper floor in the room to the right. The double doors – with a clock above them on both sides – opened up to the Main Reading Room, now the main exhibition room of the University Museum. In the final years before the move to the Broerstraat building, this was the location of the Cataloguing Department. The door at the far end leads to a smaller reading room, located on the first floor of Oude Kijk in 't Jatstraat 5. From 1929 to 1962, the University rented this house to provide the Library with additional offices, study rooms, and this reading room for the Faculty of Law.







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From the Main Reading Room the stacks could be reached through the door with the decorated inscription 'Boekendepôt'. The door in the other corner gave access to the Enschedé Room. Originally, this was the Periodicals Room. After the journals were moved to a much larger room in one of the houses at Oude Kijk in 't Jatstraat in 1969, it was converted into a reading room for manuscripts and rare books, and renamed the Enschedé Room (Enschedékamer), in honour of Willem Enschedé (Librarian, 1851-1886). This choice was undoubtedly influenced by the fact that the new name consisted of the same number of letters as the old one, 'Tijdschriften', and would thus fit in the decoration scheme above the door. Visitors needing special attention were seated in the Enschedé Room as well. One such was the aged Professor of Modern History studying old newspapers, who required assistance in turning the pages. In 1980, when a rare books reading room with a large reference collection was installed in one of the annexes at Oude Kijk in 't Jatstraat, the Enschedé Room was taken over by the secretariat and the team of Automated Literature Retrieval.

Between 1969 and 1972 the premises at Oude Kijk in 't Jatstraat 5 (again), 7, 9 and 11 were added to the Library and converted into offices, reading rooms, storage spaces, and a staff cafeteria. A sky bridge was constructed to connect numbers 7 and 9. By relocating the entrance from its rather hidden position in the Zwanestraat to Oude Kijk in 't Jatstraat 5, a separate space for the *Leidse boekjes* catalogue could be created next to the Circulation Department.

On starting in his job, Hendrik de Buck (Librarian, 1929-1958) immediately needed



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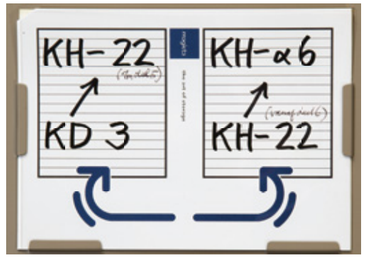


to find extra storage for the acquisitions and for this purpose the premises at Oude Kijk in 't Jatstraat 5 were acquired. This situation lasted until 1962, when the Law Reading Room was moved from here to the Faculty's building. In 1960, De Buck's successor Symen Bouma (Librarian, 1958-1963) had the fixed bookcases on two floors in the stacks replaced with mobile shelving units. Because such a system needs only little space for aisles, the total length of shelves could be extended to 16 kilometres. The installation of these units had no immediate consequences for readers because – with the exception of the professors and a few privileged researchers – they were not allowed to go into the stacks.

The books were arranged by subject with the subject code doubling as the call number. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Librarian Enschedé revised and extended this system to 69 main sections with 660 subdivisions. The call numbers consisted of a combination of letters and numbers, beginning with a letter from the Latin or Greek alphabets indicating the main subject which was further specified by an additional one or two letters, followed by a sequence number. To use space efficiently, books with similar formats were grouped together. One or more dashes, or none, in the call number indicated the size of a volume, ranging from octavo (no dash) to quarto, folio, and large folio. To many a reader, this secret language of letters, numbers and dashes remained an incomprehensible mystery.

A major disadvantage of stacking books by subject is the need to reserve space for future additions. Sooner or later, however, the shelves will be completely filled and then inevitably the entire collection has to be rearranged. In order to prevent or at least delay such an internal move, a simplified system was adopted in 1961. It takes into account only the book formats not their subject matter, and it shelves the volumes in the order of their arrival. Pocketsize books are indicated by A, monographs of average size by B, coffee table books by C, and substantially larger volumes by D, E, and F. The serial numbers range from 1-9999, with A 9999 being followed by 1A 1. Currently, we have reached 25A, 65B, and 10C. Similar call numbers are assigned to periodicals and other special materials. Fortunately for the Library staff, this new system was applied only to books acquired since 1961, and when the catalogue was digitised, the old call numbers

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with Greek and Latin letters remained unchanged. It was sufficient simply to replace the Greek letters by 'AL for alpha, 'BE for beta, etc. Readers too are happy with this development: requesting materials digitally has made it superfluous to laboriously copy call numbers on request forms, let alone to remember them.

The same situation that occurred in the 1980s, that a completely new library had to be constructed because the existing building could not be further adapted to keep up with the demands of the time, had arisen at the beginning of the twentieth century. In those days, the most prominent figure in the planning and preparation of the construction process was Antoon Roos (Librarian, 1906-1917). Educated as a classicist, he catalogued the collection of incunables (1912) and wrote the first history of the Library (1914).

The project was developed by the Government Architect Jan Vrijman (1865-1954). Other buildings in Groningen designed by him are the Academy Building (1906), the Laboratory for Anatomy and Embryology on the Oostersingel (1909), the Physiological Laboratory on the Bloemsingel (1911), and the Provinciehuis (1915), the seat of the provincial government on Martinikerkhof.

Vrijman first presented his designs in 1912. Two years later a beginning was made to clear the existing building, a fairly minor operation because only a small part of the collections needed to be moved as the stacks building dating from 1898 would remain standing.

The construction of the new Library was delayed, however, by the outbreak of the First World War. Substitute office and storage spaces were found in the basement of the Academy Building and in the former Post Office in Poststraat. It was in the Poststraat building that in January 1917 a fire started in the peat attic from smouldering ashes that had been left untended. Fortunately, not much harm was done: only a small number of books were ruined and the water and smoke damaged the covers of all 800 *Leidse boekjes* so that they had to be replaced.

Later in the year 1917, the new Library was finally completed. Its interior was decorated in the same style as that of the Academy Building. With their specially designed hand-carved wooden furniture, wainscoting, decorated plaster ceilings and patterned wallpaper, the Reading Room and the offices of the Librarian and his Deputy were considered particularly stylish. The combined stacks had ample space to store the approximately 200,000 volumes of the collection. However, cuts in construction costs had led to several technical shortcomings such as cracks and holes in the floors and an inadequately functioning central heating system. The building was finally taken into use in 1919.

A contemporary photograph shows a group of thirteen people posing on the steps to the front door. At the time, Johann Theissen (1917-1929) had just succeeded Roos (who had been appointed to the chair of Ancient History) as Librarian.




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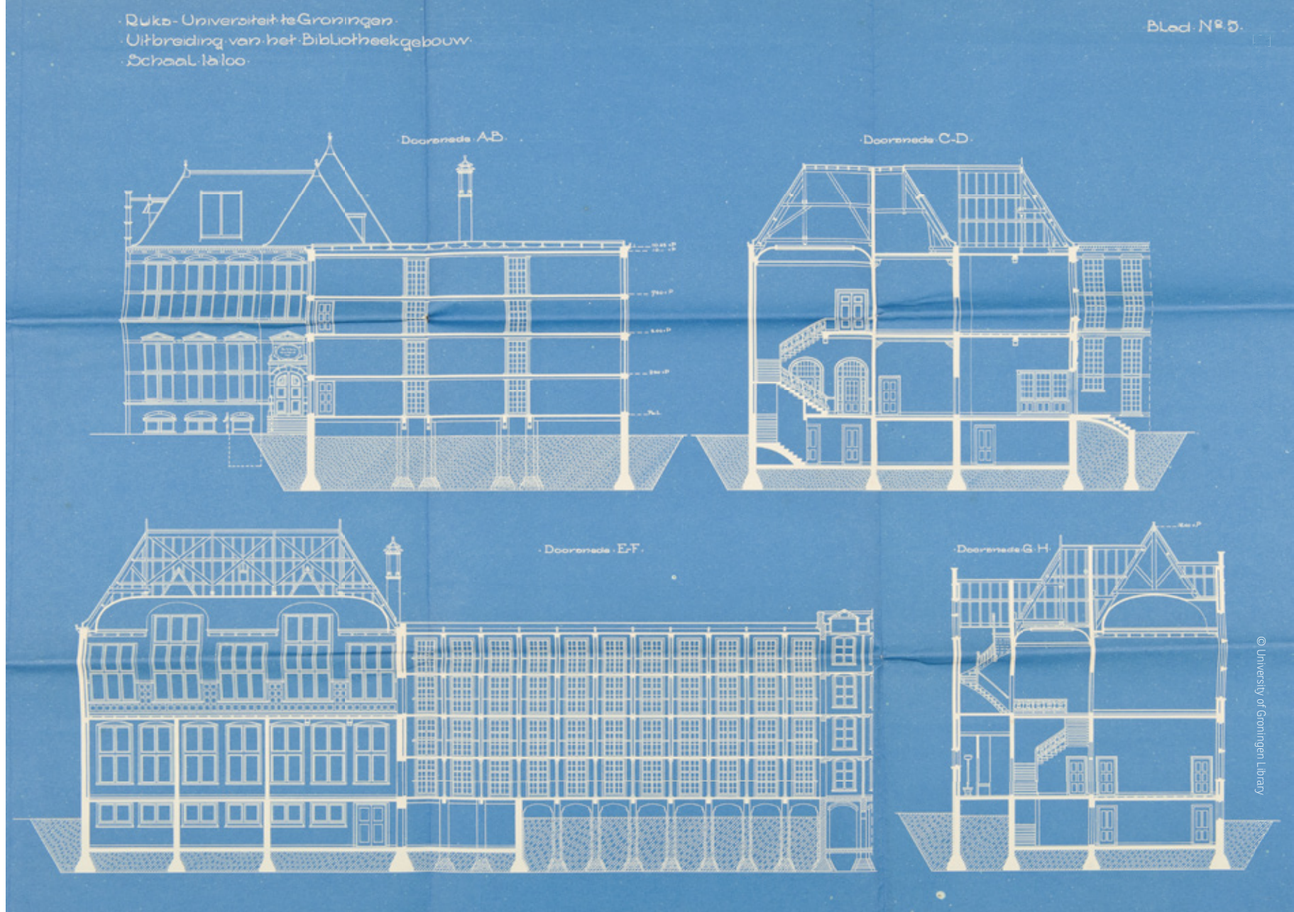


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1917-1864

# ZWANESTRAAT 33

**Vrijman's Library served for almost two decades longer than its predecessor did. That building had been completed in 1864, but at the turn of the twentieth century it began to show ever more serious technical shortcomings and could no longer adequately accommodate the increasing numbers of books, visitors, and staff. Extension was impossible because the building was hemmed in between the St Martinus Church and private homes.**

The collection, however, had doubled in size between 1898 – when an additional stacks building had been constructed – and 1914, from about 85,000 to 170,000 volumes that required about six and a half kilometres of shelving. This rapid growth was due to better funding allocated by the University and, after the introduction of the Higher Education Act of 1876, by the government too, as well as to a change in policy regarding the group of readers to be served. While until 1851 books had to be consulted in the Library – only the professors and the curators, the members of the University's governing body, enjoyed borrowing privileges – half a century later books were sent by mail to readers all over the country, also to non-members of the academic community. Therefore, books in a much wider range of fields needed to be collected, also on subjects that were not taught at the University. This attracted more visitors to the Library, and consequently their number rose to over 17,000





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in 1914, almost three times as many as there had been in 1887. Another contributing factor was the extension of opening hours to the evenings, which was made possible by the installation of electricity in 1904.

In 1900, Jan van Haarst – the first full-time Librarian 91887-1906) who did not combine his position with a professorship – was assisted by a Keeper, an Amanuensis and two attendants, and probably one or two volunteers who hoped that their jobs would eventually become paid ones. The catalogue of the manuscripts prepared by Hajo Brugmans, the Keeper from 1895 until 1897, was published in 1898. In 1914, Roos supervised eight employees, four of whom had a temporary appointment only. The subject catalogue introduced by Van Haarst was the responsibility of the Keeper, the Amanuensis was in charge of circulation, a research assistant was responsible for the alphabetical catalogue, an assistant handled other cataloguing projects, two attendants first class did mostly administrative work, while two others fetched and returned books.

In 1898, a four-storey stacks building was constructed to provide additional housing for the collections. The area needed for this expansion consisted of the yard behind the recently completed St Martinus Church (1895), the plot of the vacant sexton's house, which was pulled down, and the eastern part of the Library building of 1864. It was designed by the Chief Government Architect Jacobus van Lokhorst (1844-





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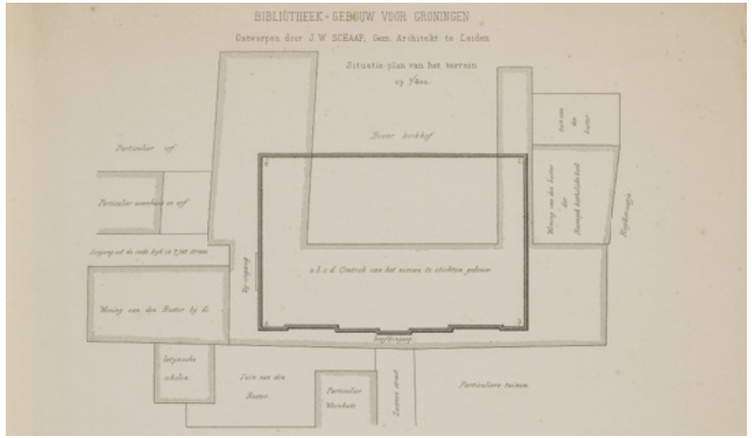
1906), whose superintendent was Jan Vrijman, the same who twenty years later would draw up the plans for a completely new Library.

The building's interior consisted of a vast empty space, four storeys high and covered by a roof with large windows, in which a huge iron framework was installed, made to measure by the company 'L'Industrie' in Louvain, Belgium. It consisted of three grilled floors and an elevation of 140 bookcases for each floor, making a total of 640, with 4,400 metres of wooden shelves. The grilled floors allowed for air to circulate and for daylight to reach the lower floors. Walking on them required some caution, and wearing very sensible footwear was almost mandatory. Moreover, it was not unusual to see staff and readers hurrying down to retrieve dropped pens and pencils.

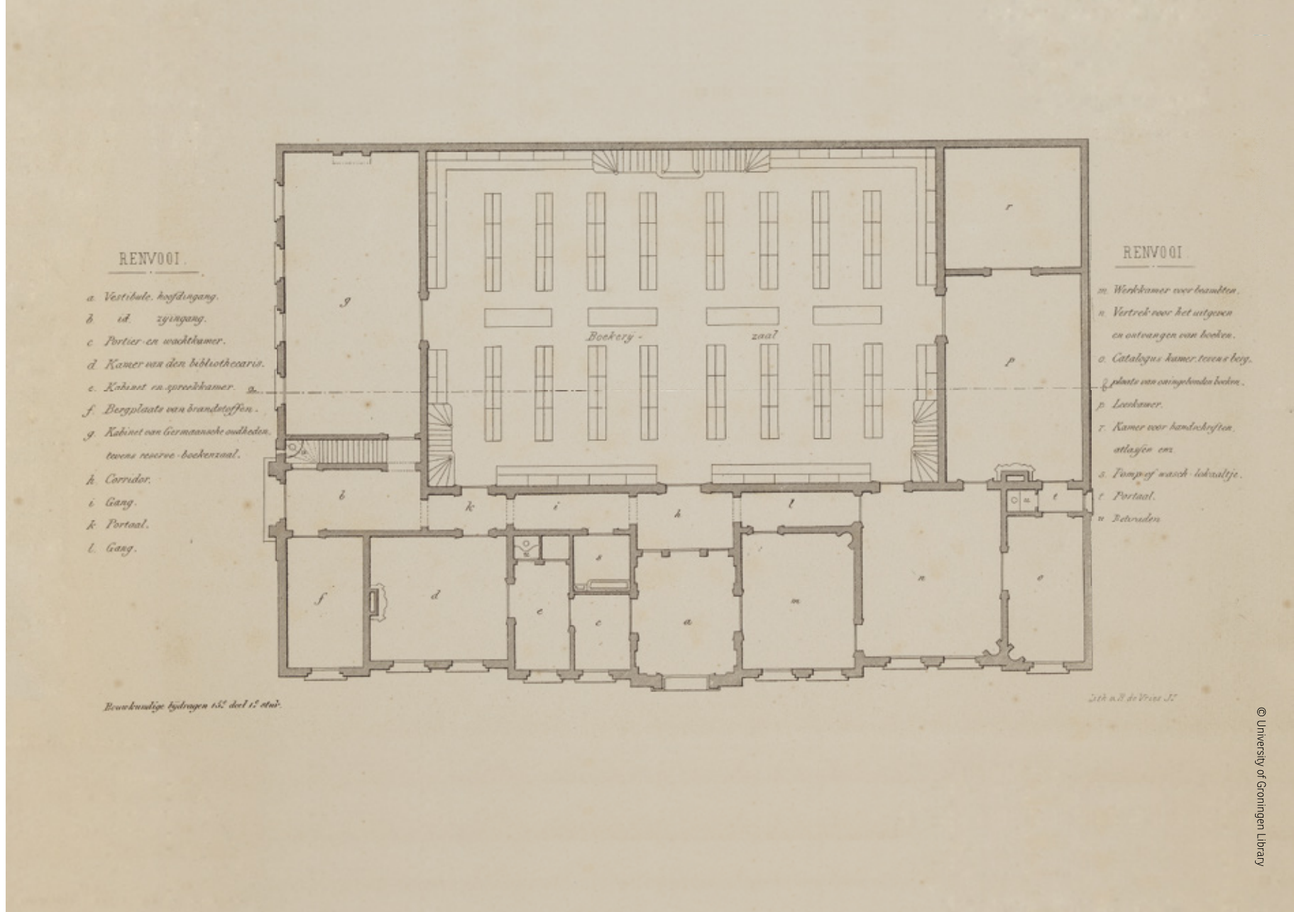
Light came into the stacks through many windows: eighteen skylights set in the roof, six windows on each floor in the north and south façade and another eight at the east side. Four lifts facilitated internal book transport. Some sections on the ground floor were partitioned off for special collections. The most precious books were later moved to a vault in the basement at the far end of the building, near the Poststraat.

The exterior of the stacks building was fairly inconspicuous. A stair turret leading to the roof was the only indulgence Van Lokhorst allowed himself. Four decorative stones were bricked in the east façade. Two large ones featuring the Dutch coat of arms and the inscription 'Rijksuniversiteitsbibliotheek' were flanked by smaller stones commemorating the year of the building's completion. Only the large stones survived the demolition of these stacks in 1986. They were fitted into the extension of the north wall of Vrijman's Library,, and when that had to be partially broken down in 2004 to create a passage from the pavilion to the University Museum, the stones were removed and placed in the Zernike depot, where they await better days.




The operation of pulling down the existing premises, constructing new ones, and moving the book collections first to a temporary and then to the new permanent accommodation was executed in Groningen for the first time during Librarian Enschedé's term of office (1851-1886). The University's curators commissioned Christiaan Brunings, the chief engineer of the Department of Water Management, to present a design. According to his brief, the building was to be constructed on the plot of the courtyard with surrounding wings of the old monastic complex in which both the University Library and the Latin School were housed. Brunings' monumental design, featuring a large classical library hall, was rejected as too expensive. Another architect was engaged, Jan Willem Schaap (1813-1887), who proposed a more compact and less costly construction.

Schaap was knowledgeable about recent developments in library construction. A few

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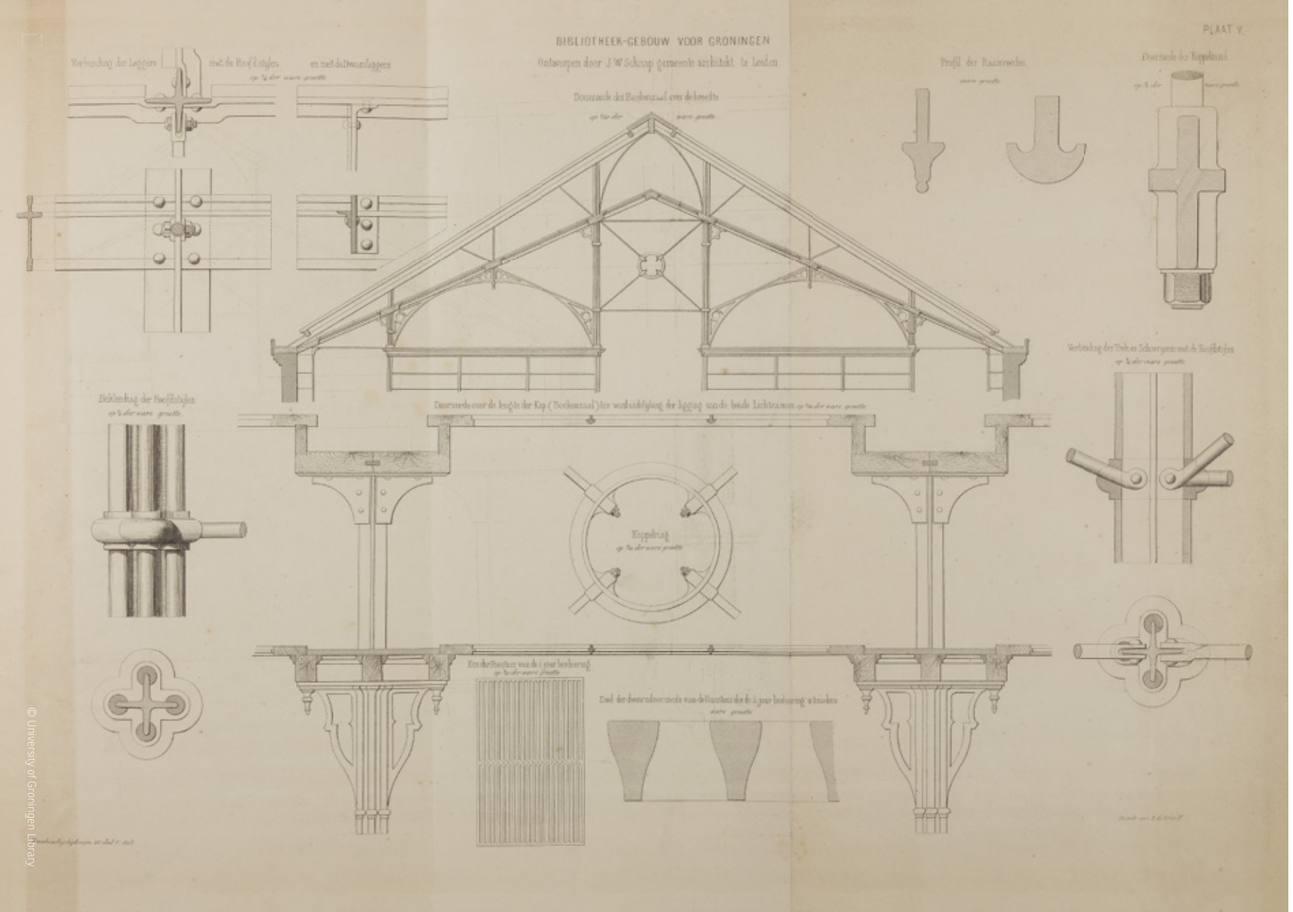


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years earlier, as newly appointed supervisor of the university buildings in Leiden, he had undertaken a study tour through England, France and Germany together with Leiden's University Librarian. Upon his return, he first oversaw the construction of an extension of Leiden's University Library, which was soon followed by the commission from Groningen for a completely new University Library. Because this would be sandwiched between private homes and the former Academy Church, which had become a Roman Catholic place of worship in 1829, optimal use had to be made of daylight coming in from above.

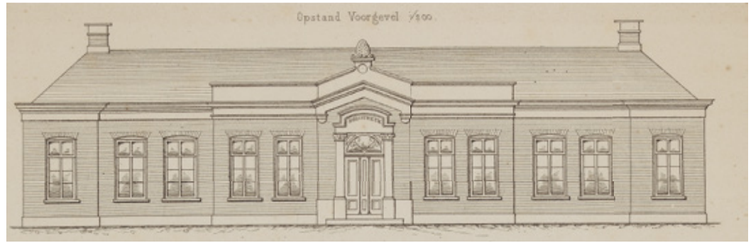
Schaap's design reveals a strong influence of the modern techniques employed in the British



Museum Library in London which he had seen on his study trip. Aiming for easily accessible collections in the smallest possible storage space, he devised a central two-storey book repository in a self-supporting iron construction with cast-iron grilled floors and a glass roof. A one-storey stone building surrounding this depot on three sides contained some smallish reading rooms, a cabinet of Germanic antiquities and the offices of the Librarian, the Keeper and the assistants. From the entrance in the Bibliotheeksgang, the Library Alley leading off the Zwanestraat, visitors could walk straight on to the book depot where they also found tables to do their reading.

The building was inaugurated in 1864 as part of the celebrations of the 250th anniversary of Groningen's University which could boast to be the first one in the Netherlands to have a purpose-built Library. However, it was another two years before it could actually be taken into use; first the gutters needed to be repaired and other technical imperfections to be fixed. Just over 40,000 volumes were placed on the four kilometres of shelves, leaving ample room for additions. The Germanic antiquities were moved elsewhere in 1874 and replaced, in 1881, with a collection of plaster casts of antique statues used for the teaching of archaeology.

Overall, the building functioned rather well. Only the glass roof turned out to be unsatisfactory: it leaked in winter and overheated the rooms below in summer. As countermeasures, new and improved gutters, air ducts and sunscreens were installed.



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1864-1615

# POSTSTRAAT – ACADEMY CHURCH

**For two and a half centuries, the Library was housed in a complex on the Broerstraat that had been built as a Franciscan monastery (*Broer* refers to the friars, i.e. brothers, *broeders* in Dutch). During this time thirteen successive professors served as University Librarians, a supplementary, though badly remunerated job.**

After six centuries, bad maintenance and the increasing weight of the ever-expanding book collections had caused the monastic buildings to become irreparably dilapidated and essentially uninhabitable. The imminent risk of its pupils falling prey to collapsing walls and ceilings forced the Latin School to move to another location in 1862. Soon after, the Library's books were transferred to the choir of the Martini Church on Martinikerkhof, while reading rooms and offices became available in the Ommelanderhuis in the street opposite. The ancient monastery could then be pulled down to make room for the ultramodern Library designed by Schaap.

In the nineteenth century, the University's Library as well as the Latin School inhabited all three wings of the monastery situated around a courtyard. The Latin School had its classrooms on the ground floor of the south




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and east wings. The alley off the Zwanestraat leading to the school's entrance, the future Library Alley, was marked with the so-called Latin Gate, built in 1633 and pulled down in 1867. The upper floors of all three wings housed the Library, which for over two centuries could only be reached through the Academy Church. In 1829, a new entrance had to be constructed in the Poststraat because falling stones made entering the church a dangerous enterprise. In that same year the University agreed to return the church to the reconstituted Roman Catholic parish.

In 1852, shortly after Enschedé, Professor of Mathematics and Physics, took office as Librarian, revised regulations for the Library came into force. Students and cultivated citizens rejoiced, as from that time onward they were finally allowed to take out books from the Library. The screens that for centuries had barred readers from direct access to the volumes were removed, and visitors could freely browse the collections during opening hours, which were between noon and 2 p.m. every day except Sunday, with an additional hour at 3 p.m. on Mondays and Thursdays. By 1853 the number of volumes a reader could choose from was almost 30,000, four times that of 1811.

Enschedé's success as a Librarian was based on the groundwork laid by his predecessor Petrus van Limburg Brouwer (1835-1847), Professor of Greek, Roman Antiquities and History. Brouwer held a doctorate in medicine too, and had practised as a physician before changing to a scholarly career; he was also the author of



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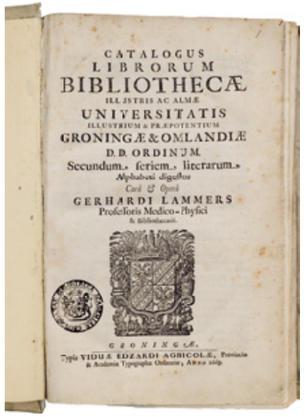
CATALOGUS
LIBRORUM
BIBLIOTHECAE
ILLUSTRIS AC ALMAE
UNIVERSITATIS
ILLUSTRIUM & PRAEPOTENTIUM
GRONINGAE ET OMLANDIAE
ORDINUM.
Secundum seriem litterarum digestus.
NOVO SUPPLEMENTO
ET
NOTITIA
Librorum Manu Scriptorum auctus.

GRONINGAE.
Typis ARENDINAE SIJGERS, Provinciae & Academiae Typographi Ordinarii, Anno 1761.


CATALOGUS
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ILLUSTRIUM & PRAEPOTENTIUM
GRONINGÆ & OMLANDIÆ
D.D. ORDINUM.
Secundum seriem litterarum
Alphabetici digestus
Cura & Opera
GERHARDI LAMMERS
Professoris Medico-Physici
& Bibliothecarii.

GRONINGÆ,
Typis VIDUÆ EDZARDI AGRICOLÆ, Provinciæ & Academiæ Typographi Ordinarii, Anno 1687.

some well-received novels. As Librarian, he solved the Library's financial problems, made up arrears in the binding of books, replaced missing and damaged volumes, and compiled a supplement to the defective catalogue that had been prepared by the previous Librarian, Johannes van Eerde (1816-1835). Brouwer's accomplishments are all the more admirable knowing that his only assistant was too old and frail to do any real work. His tasks were hardly lightened when in 1844 a classical scholar was appointed to support him who, due to other commitments, often did not show up.

In 1823, the professors had to give up their two hundred years old right to a key to the Library, and from then on they could enter only when accompanied by the Amanuensis. Consequently this official had to be available at all times (the reason that he was given rent-free living quarters nearby). Opening hours for other readers were from 9 a.m.to 1 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays, and from 2 to 4 p.m. on Thursdays and Fridays. In 1818, a heated reading room was installed. Painted boards informed visitors how to behave in the Library.

Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach, a book collector from Frankfurt who visited Groningen in 1710, noted that the Library was housed in two dark and desolate long and narrow passages with bookcases placed at one side filled only partially with badly bound books. A small cabinet contained the manuscripts. Readers could work at desks and benches in front of the windows. Uffenbach's guide, the stammering Professor of Rhetoric Adam


LEGES
PRO
STUDIOSIS ET ALIIS
QUI
BIBLIOTHECAM,
QUO TEMPORE PATET,
VOLENT INGREDI,
IN QUAS DEBENT IURARE

I.
QUivolet ius Bibliothecæ adire, is adeat Ministrum Bibliothecæ petitum a Bibliothecario Schedulam, prout ea Solvat cuius denarios vulgo Schellingos, eaque exhibita, vocali in Bibliothecam quoties Patebit, ea tempestate Doctoribus hac promulsa huius munere cum gratia fiat.

II.
Nemo eorum, qui ludorum causa Bibliothecam ingredi statuerint, quibus pueros, vel pueras secum habere, vel adducere colloquendi cum Vocemonum licentiatur, a iisdem Præsentium studijs obstrepere, & attentionem impedire possit.

III.
Qui per librum aliquem instituit studium, cupiat is fœdo & cuniculorum in Cota, loci Romanis Sobrie ejusdem, quam tradat Bibliothecæ, mini, sed hanc eam librorum litteratorum recipiat.

IV.
Ne mollibros quibus pretium, aut nomen, rubrica, aut plumbago ne inducatur, ve quidquam inscribat, aut picturis illorum, a haveratione leda, multo minus laceret, quod si secus fecerit, is pro pœna & mulcta grandiori persolvat.

V.
Nemo in Bibliotheca, a libris, aut cum illis garrit, dum alii legunt aut exscribunt.

Omnes hæc cum diligentia observent, & præcipue qui ludorum causa in illam accesserint, ne ei futurum. Si vero Bibliothecæ ejus libraria repudiata, ejus Bibliothecas recipient.
RENOVATÆ GRONINGÆ, anno clocloclxxv.

Isinck, later became the Librarian (1716-1727), and in 1722 he published a supplement to the Library's first printed catalogue which had appeared half a century before. The second room, the one in the south wing, had been taken over for use by the Library in 1667. Some magistrates had raised objections against this extension because the resulting extra duties would entail an increase of the Professor-Librarian's salary. By 1774, all three wings were filled with bookcases.

One of the instructions approved in 1668 made it the task of the Librarian to compile an alphabetical catalogue of all the books present and to have it printed. The first to whom these instructions applied was Gerhardus Lammers, Professor of Medicine (1668-1716), who must have been a fast worker: his catalogue appeared promptly in the following year. Clocking up 48 years, Lammers also holds the record for being the University's longest serving Librarian.

In 1655 students were given limited rights to use the Library during its official opening hours on Wednesdays and Saturdays, between noon and 2 p.m. in winter and between 1 and 3 p.m. in summer. The four curators and the professors – they were twelve in number at the time – all had a key and could go in and out at will. Originally the books had been chained to the cases, but the chains, chain plates and nails were removed around the year 1660 to facilitate consultation.

In line with other university libraries in the Netherlands the one in Groningen was originally accommodated in an existing building, converted for its new function. On the introduction of the Reformation to the city of Groningen in 1594 (the 'Reduction'), the possessions of the Catholic Church were put to public use. Among these was the Franciscan monastery on the Broerstraat. Originally built in the mid-thirteenth century, it consisted of wings around a courtyard with the church at the north end. In 1595, the Latin School took over the ground floors of two wings, but the remainder of the buildings stayed empty until, in 1614, the Estates of the City and the Province handed over the church to their newly established university.

The first attempt to create a university in Groningen dates from 1595, when the Estates accepted a proposal to institute a 'College'. They invited Mello Brunsema (1563-*c.* 1611), who had given up a professorship in Helmstedt (Germany) to vainly pursue an appointment in Leiden, to teach an introductory course in law. Brunsema's lectures, however, failed to attract the expected audience and had to be discontinued. In the period of peace and recovery during the Twelve Years' Truce (1609-1621) between Spain and the Republic – at war since 1568 – the Estates decided, on 26 November 1612, to found a provincial *collegium*. The first professor to be appointed was the most learned man in the region, the historian Ubbo Emmius (1547-1625). Born in Ostfriesland (Germany), where he had been rector of the Latin Schools in Norden and Leer, he had taken over the supervision of the Latin School at Groningen in 1595, just after the Reduction. In the following months, another five professors were appointed and in the summer of 1614 a printed announcement


't Franciskandr Cloostr. inde Faddstraat 1594



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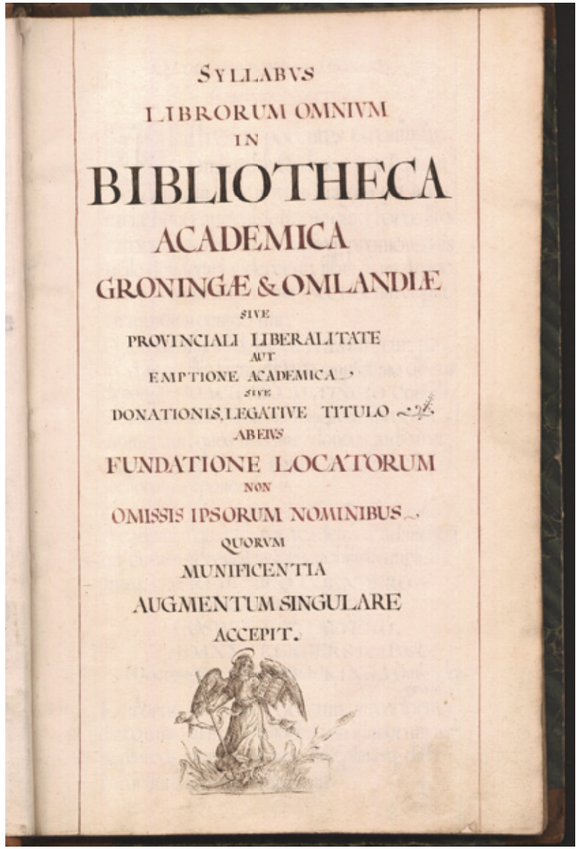
that a university would soon be opened in Groningen was distributed in the Dutch provinces and abroad. The inaugural ceremonies took place on 23 August (Julian calendar).

To house the new academy, two convents and the Franciscan monastery, all situated at Broerstraat and abandoned since 1594, were converted into Groningen's centre of learning. Three lecture rooms, a Senate Room and living quarters for the beadle were set up in the Vrouw Sywenconvent, three professors came to live in the adjacent Menoldaconvent, the Franciscans' church on the opposite side of the street became the new university's church and the venue for academic functions. The Latin School had already been accommodated in the monastic wings in 1595.

On 28 February 1615 (corresponding to 10 March in the Gregorian calendar), it was decided to install an anatomy room on the ground floor of the monastery's east wing and a library on the floor above it, the same place where the Franciscans had kept their books. To get there, one had to enter the church on the Kijk in 't Jatstraat and walk its full length up to the choir from where a staircase led to the upper floor. For the moment, however, there was not a single book to put on the shelves.

At that time it was difficult to acquire scholarly books in Groningen, let alone a whole academic library. Thus some learned men – the most prominent of them being Mayor Joachim Alting (1556-1625), who had been instrumental in founding the university – took

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it upon themselves to acquire the necessary volumes in bookshops and at auctions in Holland. Four years later, they had collected just over two hundred titles in more than four hundred volumes. Nicolaus Mulerius (1564-1630), the Professor of Medicine and Mathematics who acted as unpaid Librarian, copied a handwritten list of these books in a volume entitled *Librorum academicorum syllabus*. In the following two centuries, he and his successors added the titles of books purchased by the Library as well as many donations presented by local and foreign benefactors.

The most important pictorial source for the University Library in the Franciscan monastery is the city plan drawn by Egbert Haubois in 1643. It clearly shows the monastery's eastern wing, looking out on the courtyard, with six windows on its upper floor. This space was about thirty metres long and less than four metres wide. To catch as much light as possible, the bookcases may have been placed either at right angles to the windows or along the east wall, as described by Uffenbach in 1710. The books themselves, mostly large-format volumes, were chained to the cases.

It must have been a mixed blessing to study here. The room was unheated and the only light came from the sun. Books had to be consulted on the spot, standing at a lectern, after having taken these large and heavy tomes down from the shelves. One of the professors doubled as Librarian, and since 1626, when Mulerius started a second term (1626-1630), he received a supplement to his salary for this additional task. His main responsibility was to acquire and register new books, and to keep expenses within budget. At first, this cannot have been a very time-consuming task since there was hardly any money to spend after the University's generosity of the initial few decades had dwindled. Moreover, entry to the book room was the prerogative of the curators and professors only, and there were no regular opening hours to be kept.

Like their present-day counterparts, scholars in the early modern period generally had their own personal libraries at home. Such collections could be quite substantial and it was not unusual for professors to own more books than their universities did. Academic libraries in those days specialised in large-format books, series of source editions, and other expensive publications that most private persons could not afford to buy. At the same time, a library filled with impressively large and heavy tomes made scholarship visible to magistrates, potential donors, foreign visitors, and other dignitaries, thus enhancing a university's status.

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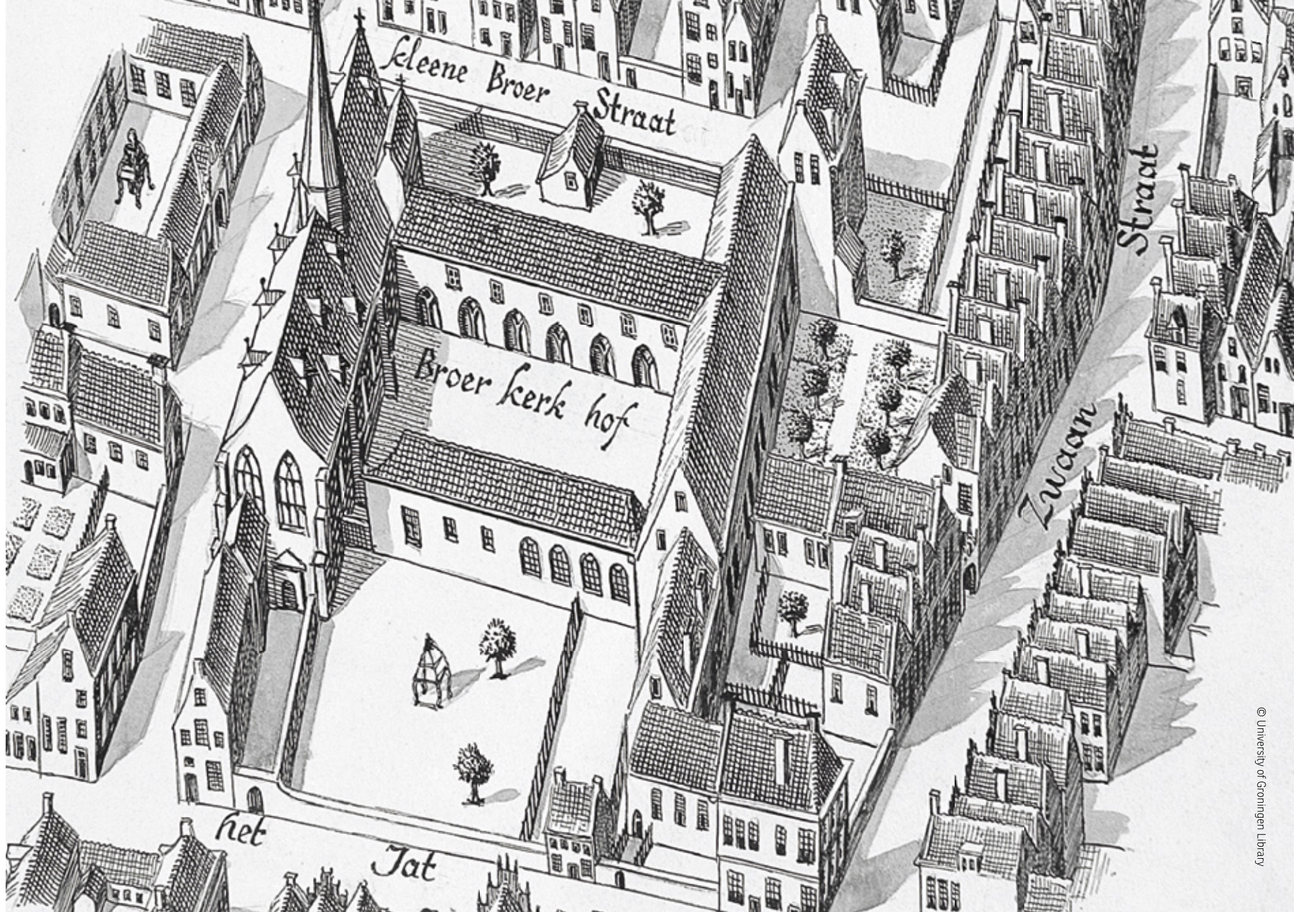


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# FORTY COLLECTIONS

**Since its foundation in 1615, the University Library has collected and managed information in diverse formats for the benefit of the academic community. In the seventeenth century, just as today, it was impossible to acquire all of the academic books in circulation and librarians have always needed to select the best and most suitable studies, editions, reference books, literature, and periodicals. New publications are added continuously but, inevitably, works that were once of topical interest eventually become out-of-date. This process tends to go faster for the sciences than for the humanities, but in the end every collection becomes a historical collection. The documents no longer contribute to the current scholarly and intellectual discourse, and instead become part of the history and memory of humankind. It is an important responsibility of repository libraries such as university libraries to preserve and present this cultural and academic heritage.**

Today, the Library possesses over three million printed and handwritten volumes, comprising works on almost any imaginable topic. They can be divided into numerous sub-collections, the major ones being those based on material type (e.g., manuscripts, maps, e-books, pamphlets, periodicals), subject (e.g., alchemy, cookbooks, Groningana, socialism), exterior characteristics (e.g., typography, bookbindings, illustrated books, annotated books), and provenance.

Many of the collections presented in the following section were brought together by individuals and organisations based in the city and province of Groningen, and thus reflect various aspects of the scholarly, cultural, social and political history of the region. Either they were purchased by the Library or they arrived as donations, bequests, and loans. Invaluable supplements to the regular collection, they fill lacunae or introduce subjects that were not yet represented. They are either kept together under a specific name or they received regular call numbers and were dispersed in the general collection. Some are further developed, while others stay as they are. It also happens that research on new topics leads to the discovery of a collection that had been formed by accident, as it were, which may then be consciously expanded. Such finds prove the great value of the Library, not only as the University's treasure house, but most of all as a repository of source materials for present and future research.




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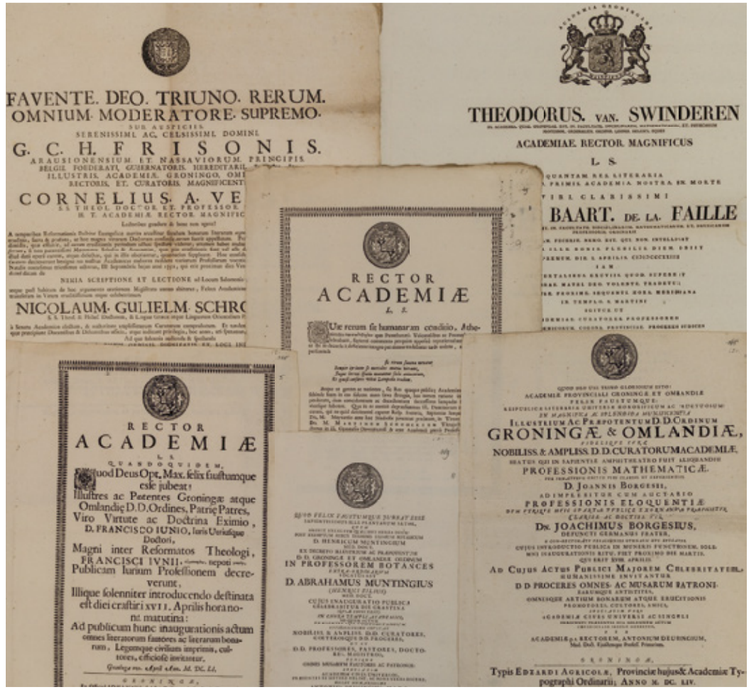
1614

# ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

In July 1614 posters appeared in the northern provinces of the Republic and adjacent regions in Germany announcing the forthcoming opening of an academy in the city of Groningen. The broadsheet was printed in 700 copies by Hans Sas, the newly appointed Printer of the Academy and the Province. This was a sought-after position since it brought with it a guaranteed source of income. Academic patrons included the University's magistrates, the Faculties, the Library and other institutions, as well as professors and students. An instruction enumerated the rights and duties of the parties involved, such as the quality of the paper and the typefaces to be used, the Printer's compensation for the printing of disputations, and the right of the Library to receive two copies of all material printed for the academy and the province. The last officially appointed Academy Printer in Groningen was Jan Oomkens, who died in 1872. The firms of P. Noordhoff and J.B. Wolters continued the production of academic publications, and by extending their activities with the publication of schoolbooks they became the largest education book publishers in the Netherlands. Among the publications produced by the Academy Printers are announcements of academic ceremonies and events – the so-called *programmata* – disputations, dissertations, orations, library catalogues, course schedules, occasional poems, ordinances and placards. *Programmata* are broadsheets announcing the change of office of the Rector Magnificus, inaugural lectures of newly appointed professors, or the funerals of members of the academic community. Although the chances of survival of such ephemeral printed matter are relatively small, the UL has a large collection of Groningen *programmata*. They form an important source for the history of the University and for genealogical studies.

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1615

# MAPS AND ATLASES

At the celebration of the official opening of the present Library building, the firms involved with its design, construction, and furnishing offered the Librarian a rare wall map of Europe. This beautifully decorated map, which now adorns the Special Collections Reading Room, was produced and hand-coloured by the office of Justus Danckerts in Amsterdam, probably around the year 1670. Because of its size – 88 x 110 cm – it was printed on four leaves. This gift mirrors the first donation received by the Library, recorded on a calligraphied and decorated page in the handwritten *Librorum academicorum syllabus*, the earliest catalogue. On 18 August 1615, one of the University's curators, the Groningen magistrate Abel Coenders van Helpen (1564-1629), donated a magnificent *Atlas sive cosmographicae meditationes de fabrica mundi*. Most of the more than hundred maps in this volume were originally drawn by the Flemish cartographer Gerard Mercator (1512-1594). Another early acquisition was Abraham Ortelius's atlas *Theatrum orbis terrarum*, printed by the Antwerp firm of Plantin in 1612. The collection which grew from these small beginnings through purchases and donations today consists of hundreds of maps, atlases, and city plans. A major collection is the one assembled by the Groningen magistrate Mello Backer (1807-1883), which came to the UL in 1900. Some of its highlights are two beautiful maps drawn by the Groningen engineer and surveyor Henricus Teysinga (1706-1756). One is of the area along the Dollard which was drowned in the Christmas Flood of 1277, while the other shows the dikes, posts, and piles along the north-eastern coast of Groningen. A fine cartographical rarity is the world map inserted in Cornelius Aurelius's *Cronycke van Hollandt Zeelandt en Vrieslant* (Leiden: Jan Seversz, 1517). Printed in 1514, also by Jan Seversz, it is the only known copy of the earliest map printed in the Netherlands.









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1619

# THE FOUNDATION COLLECTION

On 28 Februari 1615, when the decision was made to create an academic library, there was not yet a single book to place in it. A trade in scholarly books hardly existed in Groningen in these days, the reason why most books for the University Library were acquired at bookshops and auctions in Holland. Nicolaus Mulerius (1564-1630), Professor of Medicine and Mathematics as well as acting Librarian, entered the titles of these purchases in the *Librorum academicorum syllabus*. Until well into the eighteenth century, the *Syllabus* was used to record purchases and donations. Mulerius compiled a list of the just over two hundred works in 403 volumes which were present in the Library on 10 Februari 1619. Nearly all of these books are large-format volumes in Latin, Greek and Hebrew. They are mostly fairly recent publications – almost sixty percent of them date from after the year 1600 – and the majority was printed in Germany, Switzerland, and France. With 76 and 66 titles respectively, the sections on theology and law are the largest ones. History is in third place with 21 items. Only a few of the volumes were bought second hand ones, and were thus already bound. The new books were bound for the Library in dark brown leather with a characteristic type of blind-tooled decoration. About half of them are still protected by such bindings. Traces of













nails and metal plates on the back covers of many of these volumes show that originally this was a chained library. Around 1660, when students were given permission to use the Library during its regular opening hours, the chains were removed. Almost inevitably, this led to the disappearance of some volumes.

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1620

# THE CHRISTMANN COLLECTION

On 2 May 1620, the Senate – the University board consisting of the professors chaired by the Rector Magnificus – bought a small collection of books previously owned by the Heidelberg scholar Jakob Christmann (1554-1613). They were sold by Joachim Borgesius, the recently appointed headmaster of the Latin School in Groningen. He received 125 florins for thirteen manuscripts, two rolls, a folded sheet, and two printed Arabic textbooks. All of the books save one are completely or partly written in Arabic and Turkish. In the early modern period knowledge of oriental languages, especially Arabic, was of great practical use for merchants and diplomats active in the Levant and Northern Africa, while theologians needed to be well-versed in Hebrew and its related languages to develop a better understanding of the original language of the Bible. Moreover, many classical texts on medicine, mathematics, astronomy, and other sciences were passed down in Arabic translations, which in their turn needed to be translated into Latin for use by European scholars. Jakob Christmann was a well-known orientalist and astronomer who had studied in Heidelberg, where he was appointed Professor of Arabic in 1608. Eight of his books which ended up in Groningen are in his own handwriting. The only Latin book in the collection is a fourteenth-century manuscript illustrated with astronomical tables.

As printed aides for teaching and learning Arabic were few, Groningen would have been eager to buy the Christmann books as the foundation of an oriental library, particularly because they included textbooks on grammar and vocabulary. However, it was only in the second half of the eighteenth century that the oriental collection was further extended with fifteen Arabic manuscripts. Some of these were presented by Professors Petrus Camper (1722-1789), Leonardus Offerhaus (1699-1779), and Nikolaus Schroeder (1721-1796), while others appear to have been acquired at auction in 1776.





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1620

# MEDIAEVAL MANUSCRIPTS

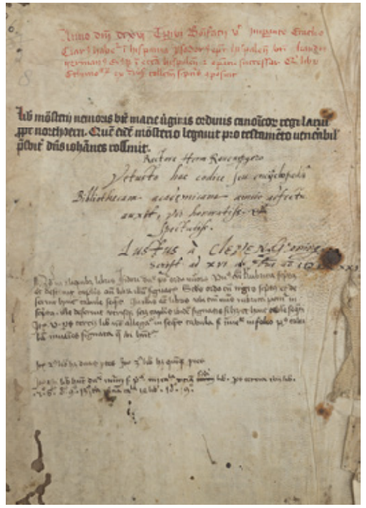
One of the Library's most prized possessions is a collection of approximately one hundred medieval manuscripts, dating from the tenth to the fifteenth century. The oldest of them is a copy, written around the year 1000, of *Etymologiae*, a popular medieval textbook by St Isidore, archbishop of Seville (*c.* 560-636), now the patron saint of the Internet. In 1620, six centuries after it was produced, the volume was donated to the Library by the Groningen magistrate Justus à Cleven.

Most of the fifty manuscripts recorded in the Library's first printed catalogue (1669) date from before the year 1600. They arrived as gifts or as part of the library of the city's Martini Church which was transferred to the University in the early 1620s.

In the following centuries the collection grew mostly through donations and bequests. The fourteenth-century copy of the *Rijmbijbel*, a rhymed biblical history by the thirteenth-century Flemish poet Jacob van Maerlant, was bequeathed by Barthold Lulofs (1787-1849), the University's Professor of Dutch Language and Literature.

The *Chronicle of the Bloemhof Monastery* (at Wittewierum in the province of Groningen), written by Emo of Friesland (d. 1237) – the earliest known foreign student at Oxford University – and Menko (d. 1276), the monastery's first and third abbots, is the oldest surviving written source for the history of Groningen. Around the turn of the seventeenth century, Ubbo Emmius (1547-1625), then rector of the Groningen Latin School, read it extensively, transcribed parts of it, and wrote comments in the book's margins. The manuscript was presented to the Library in 1852 by Wibrandus Koppius, in remembrance of his recently deceased son Frans Koppius, a minister in Den Ham, who was its last private owner.

Other manuscripts produced in the region's monasteries include a fifteenth-century lectionary for use in the monastery of Selwerd and several late-medieval books of hours, all decorated in the characteristically Groningen style. One of these was presented on the occasion of University Librarian Wim Koops's retirement in 1990.















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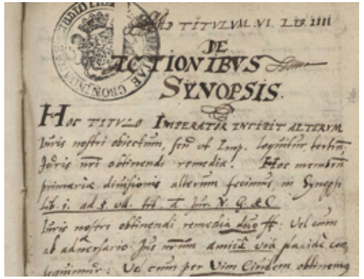
1620

# MODERN MANUSCRIPTS

Among the modern – that is to say post-1500– manuscripts, the collection of over two hundred volumes with lecture notes is one of the largest. The earliest specimens in the Library are even older: they contain the notes written in the late 1480s by young men from Groningen studying at German universities. Lecture notes by professors have survived too, such as the volumes with the inaugural lecture and course notes written by Mello Brunsema (1563-*c.* 1611), who was appointed in 1596 as professor in the newly established Faculty of Law. The Library received these volumes in 1620, as a donation from one of the University's curators, Rudolph Wycheringe. Measuring 52 x 39 cm, the two volumes of the so-called *Codex Boerhaavianus* are among the largest in the collection. They derive their name from their creator, the Leiden botanist and physician Herman Boerhaave (1678-1738). On the leaves he wrote the names of the plants that are illustrated on loosely inserted transparent leaves. These illustrations are copies Boerhaave had made of the originals in Paris which were drawn by the French botanist Charles Plumier (1646-1704) during his travels in the West-Indies. Carolus Linnaeus (1707-1778), founder of the binomial nomenclature, studied them when he spent time in Leiden in 1735. At the auction of Boerhaave's library, one of his students,



Johannes Burman (1707-1779), purchased the books. He supplemented his teacher's notes and had about half of the illustrations engraved and published as *Plantarum Americanarum* (Amsterdam 1755-1760). Even more exotic are five manuscripts from Java, Sumatra, and Bali. They are written on palm leaves which are bound together with cord between wooden covers. One was purchased by the Library in 1926, while the others were presented by various donors between 1924 and 1961.



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1624

# THE LIBRARY OF THE MARTINI CHURCH

After the official adoption of the Reformed faith in Groningen in 1594, the monasteries and other Catholic religious institutions were closed and their properties confiscated. It is not clear what happened to the book collections of these bodies. Part of them were presumably destroyed or reused, while priests and monks leaving Groningen undoubtedly took some books with them. Other volumes ended up in the library of the Martini Church, the principal church of the city. In 1622, the City Council agreed to the transfer of this collection to the University Library. One of the conditions of this transfer was that the books should be kept as a recognisable collection, separate from the rest of the Library's holdings, and that clergymen and other scholars of the city would be given free access to them. The move took place two years later. Unfortunately, no list of these books survives. Research has shown that the collection was made up of at least sixty volumes, including manuscripts and incunabula. Some of these books came from the library gathered by the very learned Wilhelmus Frederici, one of the priests in the Martini Church. He had studied theology and medicine in Cologne and Ferrara, and exchanged letters with Erasmus and other scholars. In some of his books Frederici noted where and when he had bought them, and how much he had paid to have them decorated and bound (in those days, books were usually sold as a stack of paper; it was up to the buyer to decide on costs of finishing a volume). Frederici's broad scholarly interests are evident from his book collection: beside some theological works, such as a Bible in Hebrew, he owned the encyclopaedic *Speculum Maius* by Vincent of Beauvais, the *Canon Medicinae* by Avicenna, Eusebius' church history, and works by classical as well as humanist authors.



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1669

# THE WILHELMI COLLECTION

The *Syllabus*, the Library's first catalogue, records that in May 1669 the University's curators consented to a substantial purchase, one realised through the mediation of the Mayor and curator Johannes à Julsingha. For the price of 800 florins, paid to the heirs of the surveyor Harmen Wilhelmi, the Library expanded its collection of mathematics and astronomy with another two hundred books. Included in the purchase was an astrolabe, an instrument used for making astronomical and navigational calculations that could also be used for surveying purposes. Unfortunately, the present whereabouts of Wilhelmi's astrolabe, described in the *Syllabus* as 'manufactured in a special way', are unknown. Harmen Wilhelmi was admitted as a surveyor in Groningen in 1646. As it mostly contains books on mathematics, surveying and the art of fortification, the collection must have been his professional library. Remarkably, most books are in Latin, although the education of a surveyor was in Dutch because students had not usually mastered classical languages.
The Wilhelmi collection was catalogued immediately upon arrival and its titles are included in the Library's first printed catalogue, published in that same year 1669. It was compiled by Gerhardus Lammers (1642-1719), the young Professor of Medicine who had been appointed Librarian twelve months before. Lammers retired in 1716 having been in office for 48 years. He did not keep Wilhelmi's books together as a separate collection. Instead, he placed them in their appropriate subject groups. Fortunately, with the help of the list of titles in the *Syllabus* it is easy to recognise the volumes and to reconstruct Wilhelmi's library.








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1669

# ILLUSTRATED NATURAL HISTORY BOOKS

It is one of the responsibilities of librarians to generate and sustain the public's interest in their collections. A tried and tested method is to display beautifully executed scholarly books and share their knowledge about them. One way to catch an audience's attention is the approach taken by Gisbert Eding, an eighteenth-century Groningen lawyer with a personal library of some 15,000 volumes. He was particularly fond of scaring his female audience by showing them an illustration of an enormously magnified flea in Robert Hooke's *Micrographia, or Some Physiological Descriptions of Minute Bodies Made by Magnifying Glasses* (1665).








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Among the beautifully illustrated books mentioned in Lammers's library catalogue of 1669 are Basilius Besler's description of the Hortus Eystettensis, the episcopal garden in Eichstatt (1613), Jacques Dalechamp's *Histoire générale des plantes* (*A General History of Plants*, 1615), Rembertus Dodonaeus's *Cruydt-boek* (*Herbal*, 1554), the works on zoology and botany by Conrad Gesner from the 1550s, and Andreas Vesalius's study of human anatomy *De fabrica humani corporis* (*The Make-up of the Human Body*, 1555).
A later acquisition is a copy of *Over de voortteeling en wonderbaerlyke veranderingen der Surinaemsche insecten* (*The Metamorphosis of the Insects of Surinam*, 1719) by Maria Sibylla Merian which was probably coloured by the artist herself. In 1780 a grateful alumnus, the Earl of Kintore, surprised his alma mater with a beautifully illustrated two-volume work in folio format, Mark Catesby's *The Natural History of Carolina, Florida and the Bahama Islands* (London 1771). The Earl had been born in Groningen as Antony Adriaan Falconer, son of a Scottish father and a Dutch mother. No less impressive is the set of over four hundred watercolours of Chinese fish, probably produced in Canton. They were donated to the Cabinet of Natural History in Groningen and transferred to the UL around 1870, a gift from Magdalenus J. Senn van Basel (1808-1863), a Groningen-born businessman in Batavia who had served as consul in Canton.

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1688

# BOOKS IN GREEK

Greek has always been taught at the University of Groningen. In the foundation collection, therefore, we find many works in Greek on theology, philosophy, medicine, mathematics, and history, and today the Library has an extensive collection of classical, medieval and modern Greek literature. There are only about a dozen Greek manuscripts. One of them is a fifteenth-century copy of the letters of St Paul; it was acquired in the nineteenth century but its provenance is unknown. The remaining volumes contain notes on Greek manuscripts in foreign libraries made by Tjalling Halbertsma (1829-1894), who was appointed to the chair of Greek in Groningen in 1877.
The *Syllabus* records the donation in 1621 by the Professor of Law, Cornelis Pijnacker (1570-1645), of a six-volume edition of the collected works of Aristotle, printed by Aldus Manutius in Venice in 1495-1498. The set is bound in fine green leather with gold tooling. Another publication by Aldus Manutius is the first printed edition in Greek of the plays of Aristophanes (1498). In this book, the commentary is printed in the margins, and it must have caused the compositor a great deal of trouble to keep it aligned with the main text. In 1688 the library of Jacobus Oiselius (1631-1686), Groningen's Professor of Law, was auctioned. The UL successfully bid for a magnificent two-volume copy of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in Greek and paid the sum of five guilders for this first edition, published in Florence in 1488 by Bartolomeo de' Libri. Both volumes are illustrated with hand-painted initials and border decorations. In the second half of the twentieth century, medieval and modern Greek were added to the Groningen curriculum. The UL therefore has a sizeable collection of academic books in Greek as well as modern Greek literature.








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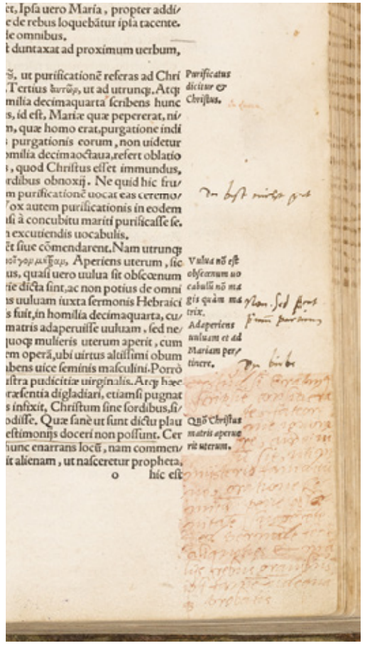
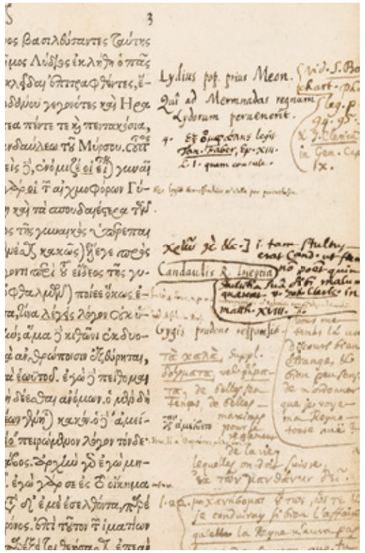
1724

# ANNOTATED BOOKS

Before he came to Groningen in 1614 to teach medicine and mathematics at the young university, Nicolaus Mulerius had practiced as a physician and had been the rector of the Latin School in Leeuwarden. For many years, he also published almanacs which were printed in huge numbers. Very few of these have survived, since copies of such ephemeral publications are usually thrown away at the end of the year. By good fortune, in 1986 the UL could acquire a very special copy of Mulerius's almanac of 1608, printed by Hans Sas in Groningen. On its interleaved pages there are some notes in French, Dutch, and Latin in Mulerius's own handwriting, with remarks on the weather, the political situation, his appointment in Leeuwarden, and other events. Such books with handwritten notes, underlinings, and comments offer valuable information on the history of book ownership and reading culture. The Library's Luther Bible is an impressive example. The first owner of this copy of the fourth edition of Erasmus's New Testament (Basel: Johannes Froben, 1527) was Martin Luther. He studied it attentively, as is obvious from the numerous underlinings and notes in which he often argues against Erasmus's readings of the text. Luther's sons gave the book to an East Frisian nobleman, and by the middle of the sixteenth-century it was in the possession of the theologian Regnerus Praedinius (c. 1510-1559), the rector of the Groningen Latin School. Praedinius in his turn dipped his pen







in red ink to add even more and often very extensive comments, frequently directed against Luther. The volume was donated to the UL in 1724. A fifteenth-century manuscript of Cicero's *De officiis* (*On Duties*) contains annotations made by both Praedinius and Wessel Gansfort (1419/20-1489), a Groningen theologian who once owned the book.

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1751

# THE CRIJNSZ COLLECTION

The Library holds thousands of pamphlets and brochures. Because such tracts could be printed quickly and cheaply, and were easy to distribute, they were an important medium to spread information and opinion. The primary purpose of pamphlets is to influence the public on a specific issue, often concerning politics or religious debate. Their sizes vary from a single sheet to several quires. Many of them are unbound, others consist of folded and stitched sheets. Some have paper covers (frequently blue). The first major pamphlet acquisition for the Library was made in 1751 with the seventeenth-century collection on religious controversies gathered by Willem Crijnsz, a minister in Maasland (in the province of South Holland) around 1600. At an auction held in Amsterdam in 1842, a collection of seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century pamphlets was bought, to which a number of items dating from the period 1779-1800 was later added. Gregorius van Alphen (1908-1988), who started his library career as an assistant in Groningen and soon became the Keeper, compiled a catalogue of the pamphlets in the UL which at the time were not recorded in the catalogue of the Royal Library in The Hague. It was published in 1944, when the author had already moved on to the position of Deputy Librarian in the Royal Library. Digital reproductions of the pamphlets catalogued by Van Alphen are included in the database *The Early Modern Pamphlets Online* (*TEMPO*). Dutch pamphlets published after 1813, the year of the accession of King Willem I, are usually called brochures. A major part of the collection in the UL was originally assembled by the *Leesmuseum* (Reading Museum), founded by a group of professors in 1867. The latest issues of periodicals to which the UL subscribed could be consulted there first, because its reading room was open for longer hours than the one in the Library. J. Reitsma (1837-1902), Professor of Theology in Groningen, collected brochures too, and they were donated to the Library in 1907.





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1805

# THE SMITH COLLECTION

Edzard Pompejus Smith (1729-1805) was born into a distinguished Groningen family of judges and mayors. He enrolled as a student of arts in his native city in 1744. The UL owns a volume with notes he took during lectures on geography given by Professor Leonard Offerhaus in 1746. At the same time, between 1744 and 1748, Smith was enlisted in the army of the Estates General in the province. In 1754 he completed his doctorate in law. During his career Smith held several administrative positions, such as judge, secretary of the municipal orphanage, deputy to the Provincial Court of Auditors, deputy to the Provincial Executive and to the Estates General.
Smith died unmarried and childless, and left his entire library of some five hundred volumes dating from the sixteenth to the very early nineteenth century to the University. His only condition was that it be placed separately from the main collection. Written in Latin, French, and Dutch, the books are mostly of a legal, historical, and philosophical nature, but there are also travel accounts, books on landscape design, and accounts of expeditions, such as Dutch translations of Charles Burney's *The Present State of Music in France and Italy* (1786) and the Baron de Lahontan's *New Voyages to North America*, or Jan Huyghen van Linschoten's *Itinerarium, ofte schipvaert naer Oost ofte Portugaels Indien* (*Itinerary, or the Voyage to East or Portuguese India*, 1614). Notes and markings in several of these books indicate that they had been in the family before becoming part of Smith's library.





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1807

# THE NAUTA COLLECTION

Hendrik Jan Nauta (1735-1807) spent all of his life in the city of Groningen, where he studied law and subsequently found employment with the municipal tax office. He graduated in law in an expensive public promotion ceremony in 1761.
Few of Nauta's colleagues would have understood his hobby, let alone have shared it. He pursued sciences such as magic, wizardry, divination, alchemy, astrology, demonology, chronology, subjects which are nowadays referred to as occult or esoteric. For a long time, however, these had been considered the traditional fields of science – Isaac Newton was a famous alchemist – but this began to change in the eighteenth century. Nauta had great interest in this development and collected hundreds of books in Dutch, German, French, and Latin, including works by followers as well as opponents of these esoteric methods. Such a specialised library would have been difficult to sell in the early nineteenth century, a reason, perhaps, why Nauta's heirs donated the collection to the University.
On arrival in the Library the books were catalogued and subsequently shelved with the relevant subject groups. The collection as such disappeared from view, but it could be reconstructed with the help of the inventory list compiled at the time of the transfer. The importance of the collection became evident when checking the titles in the national catalogue: many of the books are absent from other Dutch libraries.






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1832

# ALBA AMICORUM

The tradition of collecting contributions by friends, professors, and acquaintances in a book of friends, or *album amicorum*, originated at German universities in the sixteenth century. In those days, it was customary for students to spend time at several universities, often in various countries. Their *alba amicorum* served as a memory and a record of the relationships formed during these years. The University of Groningen has reversed the process: as part of the graduation ceremony, it presents to Master and PhD students a printed *album amicorum* as a memento of their student days in Groningen.
The UL owns several dozen albums originating from between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries. Most of them were compiled by students from Groningen or those who studied there. Such books do not traditionally belong to the category of scholarly literature, and the Library began to collect them only in the nineteenth century. The first two albums it acquired had belonged to Petrus Keuchenius (1603-1644) and his son Robert (*c.* 1629-1680), both clergymen in Groningen. They were auctioned by a descendant in 1832. Born in Wesel (Germany), Petrus Keuchenius initially studied in Marburg and then moved to Groningen in 1627.
The albums offer valuable historical information such as biographical data on the owners and their circles of friends, as well as on academic networks. Many contributors decorated their inscriptions with drawings, paintings, portraits, paper cuts, and embroidery.



Emblem books with their combination of pictures and texts provided popular themes for illustrations in albums. The collection of emblem books donated to the Library by W.G. Bakker in 1919 offers invaluable support for the study of these pictorial contributions. Albums may also supplement the frequently incomplete matriculation records of universities. For example, the *album amicorum* of Peter Baumann, a student from Moers in Germany who studied theology in Groningen between 1644 and 1648, includes inscriptions by twenty students who are not recorded in the University's register.



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1832

# THE THOMASSEN À THUESSINK COLLECTION

Although Nicolaus Mulerius, the University's first Librarian, not only taught mathematics but medicine as well and even practiced as a physician, the UL's medical collection developed only slowly. The main reason must have been that physicians preferred to keep their reference books to hand. This was certainly the case with Mulerius, because the auction catalogue of his library proves that he owned many more books on medicine than the UL did. The Library owes a remarkable donation to Evert Jan Thomassen à Thuessink (1762-1832), Professor of Practical Medicine. It is a collection of some two thousand medical dissertations defended at Dutch, German and French universities. Thuessink arranged them by theme and had them bound in 98 volumes which record their provenance as 'Don. Thuessinkii'. Medical literature of the nineteenth century is very well represented in a number of bequests. From Professor J.F.K.R. Ranke (1849-1887), educated as a surgeon in Halle (Germany), came eight hundred books together with ninety periodicals, whose subscriptions the UL continued. In 1898 a collection focused principally on obstetrics and gynaecology arrived as a bequest of Professor W.M.H. Sänger (1833-1898). H.A. Kooyker (1832-1904), who occupied the Groningen chair of Pathology and Forensic Medicine, donated his library of 1200 books to the Library. Shortly after a collection of books on neurology and psychiatry was received from the estate of Dr. A.O.H. Tellegen (1848-1904), a psychiatrist in The Hague who had been an assistant both to Kooyker and to Sänger.
In 1877 the Groningen branch of the Dutch Society for the Promotion of Medicine (Nederlandsche Maatschappij tot Bevordering der Geneeskunst) agreed to deposit in the UL the books collected by its reading society. These numbered about six hundred volumes, mostly published in the first half of the nineteenth century. Another society, the Institute for the Treatment and Care of Poor Eye Patients (Inrichting tot Behandeling en Verpleging van Minvermogende Ooglijders), established in 1879, deposited its ophthalmological collection in 1900.








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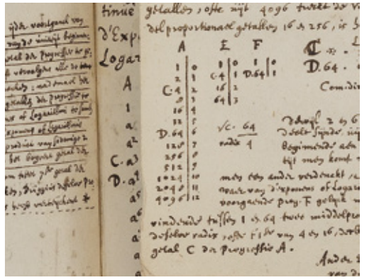
1833

# THE VAN SCHOOTEN COLLECTION

With the purchase of the library of surveyor Harmen Wilhelmi in 1669 (see above, p. 55), the Library had acquired a good foundation collection in the field of mathematics and this was expanded as best as possible.
In the early nineteenth century, an interesting donation was given by the Groningen family of Baart de la Faille. They presented fifteen manuscripts with texts on algebra, arithmetic, logarithms, and general mathematics that had been written and copied by Frans van Schooten and his half-brother Pieter. The books are first mentioned in the Library's catalogue published in 1833. They may have come from the estate of Jacob Baart de la Faille (1757-1823), who was appointed to the Groningen chair of Mathematics, Physics, and Astronomy in 1790.
Frans van Schooten (1615-1660) taught at the 'Duytsche Mathematicque', an engineering school associated with the University of Leiden. The majority of the students were surveyors, engineers, and carpenters, the reason why the lectures were given in Dutch. Van Schooten's most important work, *Mathematische oeffeningen* (*Mathematical exercises*) was published shortly after his death. He had come from a mathematical family: he had succeeded his father Frans senior as a teacher at the Duytsche Mathematicque, while he in his turn was succeeded by his half-brother Pieter.
In 1914, on the occasion of the University of Groningen's third centenary, an honorary doctorate was awarded to Alicia Boole Stott (1860-1940), a mathematician with a special talent for four-dimensional geometry. She coined the term 'polytope' for a convex solid in four dimensions. Boole Stott was able to imagine objects in four dimensions, but in her time visualising them was possible only in three. The Groningen University Museum preserves a number of such objects. Five preparatory drawings which until recently were kept in the Mathematical Institute are now in the Library.





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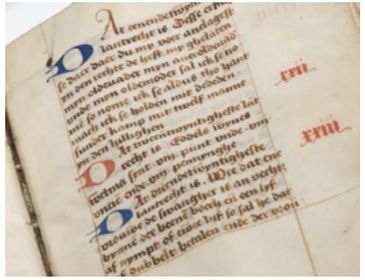
1853

# THE LIBRARY OF PRO EXCOLENDO IURE PATRIO

The Faculty of Law has always been one of the pillars of the University. Not surprisingly then, in the *Syllabus* of 1619 only the section on theology is larger than the one on law, and the development of the collection in this field has always continued. The most important acquisition made during the Library's first century is the so-called *Oceanus Juris* ( *The Ocean of the Law*), an enormous collection of texts on civil and canon law published under the auspices of Pope Gregory XIII. The set consists of 28 folio volumes printed in Venice in 1584. The University purchased them in 1668 at the price of 400 florins.
Some important additions arrived as loans or donations. In 1853, the Groningen Societas Pro Excolendo Iure Patrio (Society for the Cultivation of the Nation's Law), deposited its library in the UL. Founded in 1761 and still flourishing, Pro Excolendo is the oldest Dutch legal society. Its main goals are the study of natural and national law and the publication of legal sources. To that end, a collection of some 3,500 books concerning law and government in the northern and eastern regions of the Netherlands was formed including over a hundred manuscripts mainly with Frisian and Groningen legal texts such as the *Saksenspiegel* (*The Saxon Mirror*), a medieval compilation of Saxon law, and texts regarding such issues as land law and dike law.



A very recent arrival is the library of the Law Court of Drenthe. Donated by the District Court (Rechtbank Noord-Nederland) in 2014, it is a fairly complete collection of works on legal systems that have been in force in the Netherlands, including Roman law, canon law, customary law, and French law (which was in use between 1811 and 1813). The library was constituted by Sibrand Gratama (1784-1858) during his term of office as President of the Court at Assen. He installed it in the courthouse, exactly the right place to serve the intended users.



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1871

# THE RIEDEL COLLECTION

Hendrik Riedel (1796-1871) was first educated by his father, the rector of the Latin School in Kollum (Friesland). He turned out to be such a brilliant pupil that at the precocious age of fourteen he was appointed tutor to the sons of the Baron Van Harinxma thoe Slooten. In 1824, Riedel accompanied two of his pupils to Groningen to continue their studies at the University. Within two years, Riedel graduated and found a position as teacher at the city's Latin School. At the time, the School was housed in rooms on the ground floor of the former Franciscan monastery, while the University Library took up most of the first floor. With a fairly small number of pupils to supervise, Riedel had plenty of time to prepare his thesis on the Latin poet Horace's *Letter to Augustus*, which earned him a doctorate in 1831. The life and works of Horace remained a lifelong interest of Riedel. He continued to publish on the topic and amassed a large collection of editions, commentaries, and studies. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century German dissertations and school programmes form an interesting group in the collection. After his death in 1871, Riedel's library was sold. It took twelve days to auction the 6596 lots, 600 of which were acquired by the Library. Excluded from the sale were the more than 1100 titles of Horatiana. In accordance with



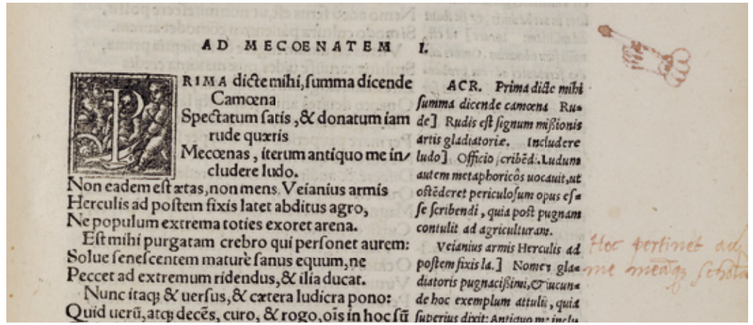


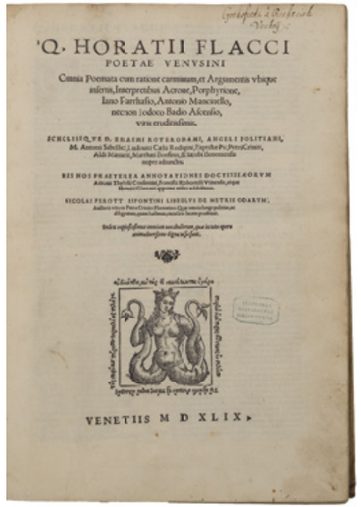
Q. HORATII FLACCI
opera cum quatuor commen-
ADIECTAE IN CALCE LIBRI EVNDEM IN AVTHO
PARISIIS.




© University of Groningen Library

Riedel's wish they had been bought by the Harinxma family who then donated them to the UL. Since then, the collection has been further developed and a special catalogue, compiled by Alie Bijker, was published in 1996. An early example of a book illustrated with photographs is a Latin edition of Horace's works published by the firm of Firmin Didot in Paris, in 1855. A volume with a remarkable provenance is a copy of the *Opera* printed in Basel in 1545. Written on the title page is the name of Hindrik Hofsnider (1671-1741), a Groningen jurist, and there are a few annotations in the book itself in the unmistakable handwriting of Regnerus Praedinius (1510-1559). In the margins of Horace's first letter to his patron Maecenas, the headmaster of the Groningen Latin School wrote: 'Hoc pertinet ad me mea(m)que schola(m)' ('this pertains to me and my school'). Apparently, this book has been in Groningen since it was acquired by Praedinius shortly after publication.


AD MECOENATEM I.
RIMA dicte mihi, summa dicende
Camœna
Spectatum satis, & donatum iam
rude quæris
Mecœnas, iterum antiquo me in-
cludere ludo.
Non eadem est ætas, non mens. Veianius armis
Herculis ad postem fixis latet abditus agro,
Ne populum extrema toties exoret arena.
Est mihi purgatam crebro qui personet aurem:
Solue senescentem maturè sanus equum, ne
Peccet ad extremum ridendus, & ilia ducat.
Nunc itaq; & uersus, & cætera ludicra pono:
Quid uerũ, atq; decẽs, curo, & rogo, oĩs in hoc sũ
ACR. Prima dicte mihi
summa dicende camœna Ru-
de] Rudis est signum missionis
artis gladiatorie. Includere
ludo] Officio scribẽdi. Ludum
autem metaphoricos uocauit, ut
ostẽderet periculosum opus esse
se scribendi, quia post pugnam
contulit ad agriculturam.
Veianius armis Herculis ad
postem fixis la.] Nomen gla-
diatoris pugnacissimi, & cucur-
de hoc exemplum attulit, quia
superius dixit: Antiquo me in-


'Q. HORATII FLACCI
POETAE VENVSINI
VENETIIS M D XLIX.


Q. Horatij Flacci opera cum
Opus autem de arte poetica
Sermones vero et epistole
VIRTVTEM VIDEANT INTABESCANTQVE RELICTA
DEINDE ROCE



© University of Groningen Library




© University of Groningen Library

1900

# THE BACKER COLLECTION

One of the focal points of the Library's collection policy is on material concerning the region's history and culture. The principal collection of Groningana goes back to Mello Backer (1807-1883), a scion of a distinguished and well-to-do Groningen family. In 1830, the year of his graduation in law, Backer took part in the Ten Days' Campaign to suppress the revolution in Belgium. As a member of the Provincial Estates and the Provincial Executive, and president of the Commission of Agriculture, he gained a wide knowledge of the province. Backer's less than onerous duties allowed the wealthy bachelor plenty of time to spend on his interests. One of these was expanding the collection of china that had come down to him from his great-great grandfather Jan Albert Sichterman (1692-1764), who had acquired a fortune in Bengal in the service of the Dutch East India Company. Upon his return to Groningen – as the story goes, two ships were needed to transport his art collection – Sichterman built an imposing town palace at the Ossenmarkt. Backer also devoted much attention to his library, amassing a significant collection of books, manuscripts, and maps, mostly concerned with the law, history, geography, agriculture, and water management of the province of Groningen. Besides these, he owned letters, sales catalogues, pamphlets, and government publications such as edicts and ordinances. Backer's heir was his nephew, R.M.A. de Marees van Swinderen (1823-1899), who bequeathed Backer's porcelain to the Groninger Museum and his library to the University.

The collection on the history of agriculture was greatly expanded when the Nederlands Agronomisch Historisch Instituut (the Netherlands Agricultural Historical Institute, NAHI) deposited its important library in the UL in 1990.






© University of Groningen Library

1905

# THE CONAMUR COLLECTION

The Groningen Student Association to Promote the Social Sciences Conamur (Groningsche Studenten-Vereeniging tot Beoefening der Sociale Wetenschappen Conamur) collected literature on the labour movement to supplement the Library's collection. Conamur (Latin for 'we strive') was founded in 1899 and organised lectures, courses, and discussions with the objective of raising the awareness of Groningen students about the study of social science. Initially, the association flourished, but after 1906 the audiences at its meetings dwindled. After World War I, a revival was unsuccessful and Conamur was dissolved in 1927. The Conamur collection contains books and brochures about the labour movement and literature on political economy. It was first located in the bookshop of H.L. van der Klei in Oude Ebbingestraat, where members could borrow items free of charge; in 1905 the collection was transferred to the UL. A catalogue had been printed two years earlier and a second edition appeared in 1912. The reason why Conamur included pamphlets and brochures in its collection was that they were printed on poor, cheap paper to make them affordable for labourers, but with the result that they had a short lifespan. Because of their historical value, however, the Conamur members judged it important to preserve at least a few copies of such publications in public libraries. In 1986, the Library received a collection of older periodicals and books related to the fields of socialism and communism from Stan Poppe Sr (1899-1991), a long-time active member of the Social Democratic Labour Party (SDAP).







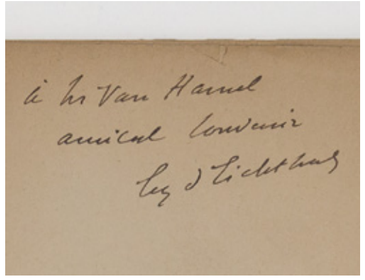
© University of Groningen Library

1907

# THE VAN HAMEL COLLECTION

For many centuries Latin was the lingua franca of the international scholarly community. Knowledge of modern languages, on the other hand, was indispensable for merchants, diplomats, and travellers, even learned ones. From time to time opportunities to improve one's languages skills were offered in Groningen. In the 1600s, for example, a student received permission to give French lessons, while another student, whose family refused to support him financially because he had left the Catholic Church, earned his living by teaching Italian. Nevertheless, it was not until 1877 that regular courses in German, French, and English language and literature started to be offered at Groningen – the first Dutch university to do so. In 1881, three years after his admittance as private tutor in High German and English, Barend Sijmons (1853-1935) received a professorship to teach Old German, Comparative Linguistics, Sanskrit, and High German Language and Literature. For the time being though, this was only at the level required for teacher training; doctorates were not granted until 1921. In 1884, Antonius Gerardus van Hamel (1842-1907) became the first Professor of French Language and Literature. His library with some 1200 publications focusing on medieval French was deposited in the UL in 1907. In 1925, the Association to Promote the Study of French (Vereniging tot Bevordering der Studie van het Frans) transferred its book collection with about eight hundred titles to the UL. Today it contains about a thousand volumes, mainly nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature. The Professor of English, Johan Gerritsen (1920-2013), bequeathed his sizeable library with early English books, dictionaries and bibliographical literature to the UL. Already in 2001, he had donated his collection of some 220 seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century editions of works by Joost van den Vondel, the most prominent Dutch poet and playwright of the seventeenth century. They form an important addition to the collection already present. It had taken a while before the Library showed any interest in Vondel: his works appear for the first time in the printed catalogue of 1841.



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1907

# THE LIBRARY OF THE NATUURKUNDIG GENOOTSCHAP

The Groningen Physical and Chemical Society (Natuur- en Scheikundig Genootschap te Groningen, subsequently the Koninklijk Natuurkundig Genootschap), was established on 28 February 1801. The Society's goal is to promote widely the knowledge of sciences through lectures open to both members and non-members and through publications. Each year, a grant named after one of the Society's founding fathers, Theodorus van Swinderen (1784-1851), is given for the best summary of a scientific dissertation. Van Swinderen not only taught natural history in Groningen, he also served as a school inspector for over forty years, and thanks to him several historical monuments were put up in the city and the province. His own memorial bust is now to be found near the entrance of the University Museum. The Society's library containing works on scientific themes and reports of and works published by other scholarly associations was deposited in the UL in 1907. Today the collection consists of some 4,500 works, including the Society's own publications.




© University of Groningen Library

1908

# THE GUYOT COLLECTION

Henri Daniel Guyot (1832-1908), a judge and later Vice-President of the Groningen district court, not only published in the field of law, but also on the history of French Protestantism and the réfugiés, Protestants who had fled France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV in 1685. This interest was probably related to the origins of his grandfather, after whom he was named. Born near Liège, in Belgium, Henri Daniel Guyot Sr (1753-1828) studied theology in Franeker and in 1777 settled in Groningen as the pastor of the Walloon church. Some years later his focus shifted to the education of deaf people, and in 1790 he was one of the founders of the first Institute for the Deaf in the Netherlands. This interest in deafness and its consequences was inherited by his grandson, as is reflected in the collection he left to the University. Guyot also bequeathed a sum of 10,000 guilders, to grant a five-yearly award to the person who has made the most important discovery in the field of otology, the anatomy and physiology of the ear. In 2010, the Guyot Prize was awarded to Professor A.J. Hudspeth of Rockefeller University in New York.








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1912

# THE ENSCHEDÉ COLLECTION

Born in Groningen in 1846 as one of the sons of the University Librarian Willem Enschedé, Jacobus Enschedé died in 1912 in Surabaya, in the Dutch East Indies, where he had been the State Attorney. His interests were wider than the law alone, as is evident from his membership of various cultural associations, such as the Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences (Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen). His younger brother Maurits (1856-1934) settled in Surabaya as well, and succeeded him as State Attorney. Both Enschedé siblings were collectors. Maurits surrounded himself mainly with art objects from the Dutch East Indies, while Jacobus amassed an immense library of books and periodicals on Dutch and English colonial history and politics, including a section on railways – reports of Dutch and East Indian railway companies in particular. He bequeathed this collection to Groningen's University Library. The books arrived in Groningen in 1913, about 160,000 volumes packed in 260 boxes and insured for 50,000 guilders. They arrived in good shape, considering that they had been kept in tropical conditions for such a long time. After packaging, only a few boxes allowed some vermin to settle in them and the affected books were irreparably damaged. Once shelved in the Library, the Enschedé Collection occupied almost a complete floor in the stacks. To finance the collection's expansion, Enschedé also made a provision for a capital giving an annual interest of 800 guilders. In consequence, items are still being added on a regular basis to the Enschedé Collection.






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1924

# THE DE HAAN COLLECTION

After finishing his studies at Leiden and Groningen, the Leeuwarden-born Hispanist Fonger de Haan (1859-1930) departed to the United States where he received a doctorate from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore in 1895. Two years later he was appointed at Bryn Mawr College. In 1924 – the year in which he retired as Professor of Spanish Language and Literature – De Haan donated his library to the UL in Groningen where, during a sabbatical leave five years before, he had tried to raise the interest in the study of Spanish language and culture. It took another four years for the first private tutor to start teaching Spanish. He was Gerardus Johannes Geers (1891-1965), a scholar of Dutch, who had graduated in Leiden in 1917 with a thesis on the language of the Blackfoot Indians. Geers then spent three years in Spain and became fascinated by its language and culture. In 1932, he exchanged his unpaid tutorship in Groningen for a regular teaching position at a high school. Fourteen years later he returned to the University as a lecturer, a position that was promoted to an extraordinary professorship in 1961, the year before his retirement. Geers's private library, which the UL acquired in 1966, focuses on the Baroque, the Spanish Civil War, social-realistic literature, and Spanish philosophy, in particular the works of Miguel de Unamuno and Jose Ortega y Gasset.




Afterwards the UL also acquired Geers's lecture notes and documents related to his research. In 1943, books collected by Johan Brouwer (1898-1943) were donated to the UL by his widow, who had been on the Library staff until her marriage. Brouwer graduated in Groningen in 1930 and received his doctorate in the following year, after a tumultuous period in which he had worked as a missionary and had spent some years in prison having been condemned for murder. He published historical studies on topics related to Spain, translations, textbooks, a dictionary, and two novels. With Geers he co-authored *De Renaissance in Spanje* (1932). Influenced by his experiences as a newspaper correspondent in Spain during the Civil War he was active in the resistance during the German occupation of the Netherlands during World War II. In 1943 he participated in an attack on the Amsterdam registry office, for which he was condemned and executed. A fourth Hispanic collection is the modest library of the Groningen branch of the Dutch-Spanish Society (Vereniging Nederland-Spanje), which was deposited in the UL in 1932.

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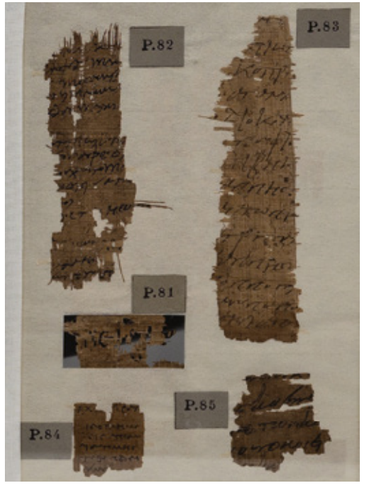
1926

# PAPYRI

A collection of 127 fragments of texts written on papyrus arrived in the Library in 1926. It had been acquired in Egypt through the leading papyrologist of the time, Professor Wilhelm Schubart of Berlin University. The fragments were mounted between glass plates in thirty-five sets by the famous papyrus conservator Dr. h.c. Hugo Ibscher. The initiative to enrich the Library with this collection was taken by Antoon Roos (1877-1953), Professor of Ancient History and Roman Antiquities (1916-1947), who had previously been the UL's Keeper (1904-1906) and then Librarian (1906-1917). The exact origin of most of these fragments is unknown. In a few cases, the texts provide some clues: one is from Oxyrhynchus, a city in Upper Egypt, two others are from the Arsinoites district, and another one is from Hermopolis. All were written in the Roman or Byzantine era, and can be dated to the period between the second and the sixth or seventh centuries. In 1933, Roos published twenty-two fragments, judging the remaining ones to be too small or in too bad a condition for publication. Half a century later, Dr Ignace H.M. Hendriks of Groningen University, in collaboration with other papyrologists, published a few more of the fragments. After almost a century, the glass plates were aged and dirty, two plates were broken, the paper placed between papyri had browned, one fragment was affected by fungus, and salt migration had caused a white deposit on all of the glass plates. Thanks to a grant given by the Atlas Fund, the necessary conservation treatment could be carried out by Dr. Machteld van der Feltz. The collection is now kept in four made-to-measure boxes.






© University of Groningen Library

1929

# THE BIBLIOTECA ITALIANA

A significant contribution to the Library's collection of Italian literature was made by the Groningen branch of the Società Dante Alighieri. This society was founded in Rome in 1889 with the purpose of promoting and distributing Italian language and culture abroad. The library of the *comitato* at Groningen was deposited in the UL in 1929, in order to make it possible for non-members, too, to inform themselves about Italian literature, art, and cultural developments. Until 1955, the Roman headquarters regularly supplemented the collection. A special catalogue of all the Italian books in the Library was published in 1938. The collection of over a thousand items not only contains novels and non-fiction books, but also many periodicals, especially from the 1920s and 1930s, relating to art, theatre, music, architecture, and politics. A collection of studies on the influence of Italian art and culture in the northern provinces of the Netherlands during that period was published in 1991, to coincide with an exhibition on the subject that was held in the Library and showed numerous items from the Biblioteca Italiana.






© University of Groningen Library

1954

# THE STAVERMAN COLLECTION

Movies and TV shows such as *Castaway* or *Survivor* (*Expeditie Robinson*) are modern interpretations of the old theme of how to survive on a desert island. *The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner*, a fictional autobiography published in 1719, is the model for these and countless other imitations in a variety of media. Robinson Crusoe's fame is such that it is easy to forget that he is the creation of the English journalist and author Daniel Defoe (*c.* 1660-1731). An immediate bestseller, *Robinson Crusoe* had three reprints in the year of its publication, followed by innumerable editions, translations, as well as adaptations as children's books and comics, plays, movies and television shows. Werner H. Staverman (1881-1956), a teacher of Dutch at a secondary school in Deventer, earned his doctorate in Groningen with a thesis entitled *Robinson Crusoe in Nederland: een bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van den roman in de XVIIIe eeuw* (*Robinson Crusoe: A Contribution to the History of the Novel in the Eighteenth Century*). Staverman's interest in the subject continued, and he built a collection of adaptations, translations, and especially imitations of Defoe's book, the so-called 'Robinsonades'. There are, for example, German, French, Flemish, Dutch, Saxon, Silesian, Spanish, Swedish, and Swiss Robinsons, a *Robinson des demoiselles*, a *Robinson der Jüngere*, a *Nuevo Robinson*, *De nieuwe Robinson van Parijs*, and countless daptations, many of them for children. They appeared in all kinds of genres, as schoolbooks, plays, children's encyclopaedias, education manuals, language courses, and comic books. Staverman donated his collection to the Library in 1954, along with a related collection of utopian literature, and it is still being expanded.

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1974

# BOOKBINDINGS

In the first place bindings serve to preserve the contents of a book, protecting the leaves forming the book block. Because of this functionality, libraries often replace damaged bindings, particularly in times when money is not an issue. In Groningen this was not often the case, the reason why many of the UL's old books still have their original bindings. Some bindings in the Christmann Collection (see above, p. 49) are notable because the original owner provided them with covers made of written vellum leaves cut from medieval manuscripts. There is also a collection of prize bindings: from the seventeenth until the nineteenth century schools awarded their best pupils with books, mostly copies of classics of the humanities, bound in leather with the city's coat of arms or the school's crest embossed on their front covers. A diploma with the name of the prize-winner would be pasted in the front of the book. A collection of about a thousand Dutch commercial publishers' bindings from the period between 1890-1940, purchased in 1974, has grown considerably and now numbers about 3,500 volumes. Among the designers represented are Hendrik P. Berlage, Theodoor van Hoytema, Ella Riemersma, and Jan Toorop.

Other special bindings were made at the instigation of private individuals. On the occasion of the second centenary celebrations of the University of Groningen in 1814, the members of the philosophical society Veritas et Officium donated a specially bound set of Immanuel Kant's *Opera ad philosophiam criticam* (1796-1798) to the Library. Four volumes donated in 1761 and 1765 by an Englishman who called himself 'a lover of liberty' are bound in distinctive gold-tooled red goatskin, decorated






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with emblems (of, for example, Britannia, Freedom, and an owl). The anonymous donor was Thomas Hollis (1720-1774) of Londen, a renowned defender of civil liberties and an advocate of the rights of American colonists. He distributed works of radical political philosophy among libraries in England and the United States. Groningen received copies of John Wallis's *Grammatica linguae Anglicanae* (*Grammar of the English Language*, 1765), Thomas Birch's edition of *The works of John Milton* (2 vols., 1753), and *Amyntor, or a defense of Milton's life* by John Toland (1761).





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1975

# PRIVATE PRESSES

In the 1960s, when composed lead type was replaced by offset printing and phototypesetting, commercial printing companies dumped their hand presses and movable type on a large scale. Many amateur printers succeeded in saving this material from destruction to use it for the production of their own finely printed books, publications which emphasise quality and individuality more than profit. In 1975, a group of Dutch private press printers and publishers founded the Society Printing in the Margin (Drukwerk in de Marge). Its members share an interest in the craft of printing, printing techniques, and publishing, and about two hundred of them produce publications on a more or less regular basis.

The UL owns a wide selection of works by these 'marginal printers', including ones from the region such as Elze ter Harkel (De Vier Seizoenen), Dick Ronner (Trionapers), Hester Verkruissen, and Pim Witteveen (de Breukenpers). Special editions such as the boxes presented as a collaborative effort to celebrate a member's jubilee anniversary give an excellent impression of the craftsmanship and designing skills of these printers.






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1979

# BOOKS PRINTED IN GRONINGEN

For a long time, the printers of early modern books, periodicals, pamphlets, and broadsheets did not appear in library catalogue descriptions. This gap in information was filled in the mid-twentieth century and the Library's collection of works printed in Groningen before 1800 could be published in 1979 thanks to the efforts of the cataloguer F.C. Willemse. The publications are mainly in the field of theology, with academic publications such as *programmata*, disputations, and dissertations forming other important elements of the collection. However, the huge print runs of schoolbooks, children's books, almanacs, and other ephemeral works are almost completely lost.

The published works of significant Groningen scholars is another field collected by the UL. The commemoration of the eminent early humanist scholar Rudolf Agricola (1444-1485), half a millennium after his death, gave rise to a renewed study of his work. After a ten-year sojourn in Italy, the multitalented Agricola, born in the village of Baflo near Groningen, returned to his homeland to become the Municipal Secretary. He is considered the most brilliant of the group of intellectual predecessors of the University, to which the theologian and philosopher Wessel Gansfort (1414-1489) and Regnerus Praedinius, rector of the Latin School in Groningen, also belonged. The last great humanist scholar in Groningen was the historian Ubbo Emmius (1547-1625), who in 1614 served as the University's first Rector Magnificus. A sizeable part of his correspondence is preserved in the Library, as well as some of the *alba amicorum* (students'


Gedruckt Tot Groningen /
By CORNELIS BARLINCK-HOF, Ordinaris Stadts
Boeckie-Druckier / Anno 1677.


Gedruckt tot GRONINGEN,
By CAREL FIEMAN, Boek-drukker, en Verkooper, aan het Vilmarkt. 1685.


GRONINGAE,
Typis ARENDINAE SIJGERS, Provinciae & Academiae Typographae Ordinariae, Anno 1722.


GRONINGÆ,
Typis JACOBI BOLT, Provinciæ Typographi, Anno 1758.

friendship books, see above, p. 64) to which he contributed, and a travel report of the journey he made to Geneva as a young man. Emmius's own books has been dispersed, some remaining in Groningen, while others have ended up in far-away parts of the world such as Tasmania, which was discovered seventeen years after Emmius's death by Abel Tasman, born in the province of Groningen.


Tot Groningen, by DOMINICUS LENE, Boeckdrucker op Vorstcooper in de Ligonyne-Elleboogh, inde Olde Kerk Straet. MDCLXXIII.


GRONINGÆ,
Apud GEORGIUM & HAJONEM SPANDAW, 1737.


TE GRONINGEN,
By GESINA ELAMA, Ordinaris Stadts Bockdrukkersche. 1731.


GRONINGÆ
Typis Gerhardi Nicolai Fossema, Typographi & Bibliopolæ A. Dom. M DC LXXXVI.


Te GRONINGEN,
By JACOBUS SIPKES, en Comp.
MDCCXLV.


GRONINGÆ,
Typis VIDUÆ EDZARDI AGRICOLÆ, Provinciæ & Academiæ Typographæ Ordinariæ, Anno 1669.


GRONINGÆ,
apud TJERCK EVERTS ATHLAS Bibliopolam in platea vulgo dicta Cygnea: Anno M. D CXC.


GRONINGÆ & BREMÆ.
Apud HAJ. SPANDAW } Bibliopolas.
& G. W. RUMP. }


GRONINGÆ,
Apud Æmilium Spinneker, Bibliopolam,
Anno MDCLXXIII.
Cum Privilegio.


TOT GRONINGEN,
Gedruckt, By CORNELIS BARLINCK-HOF, Ordinaris Stadts Boeck-Drucker; Anno 1677.



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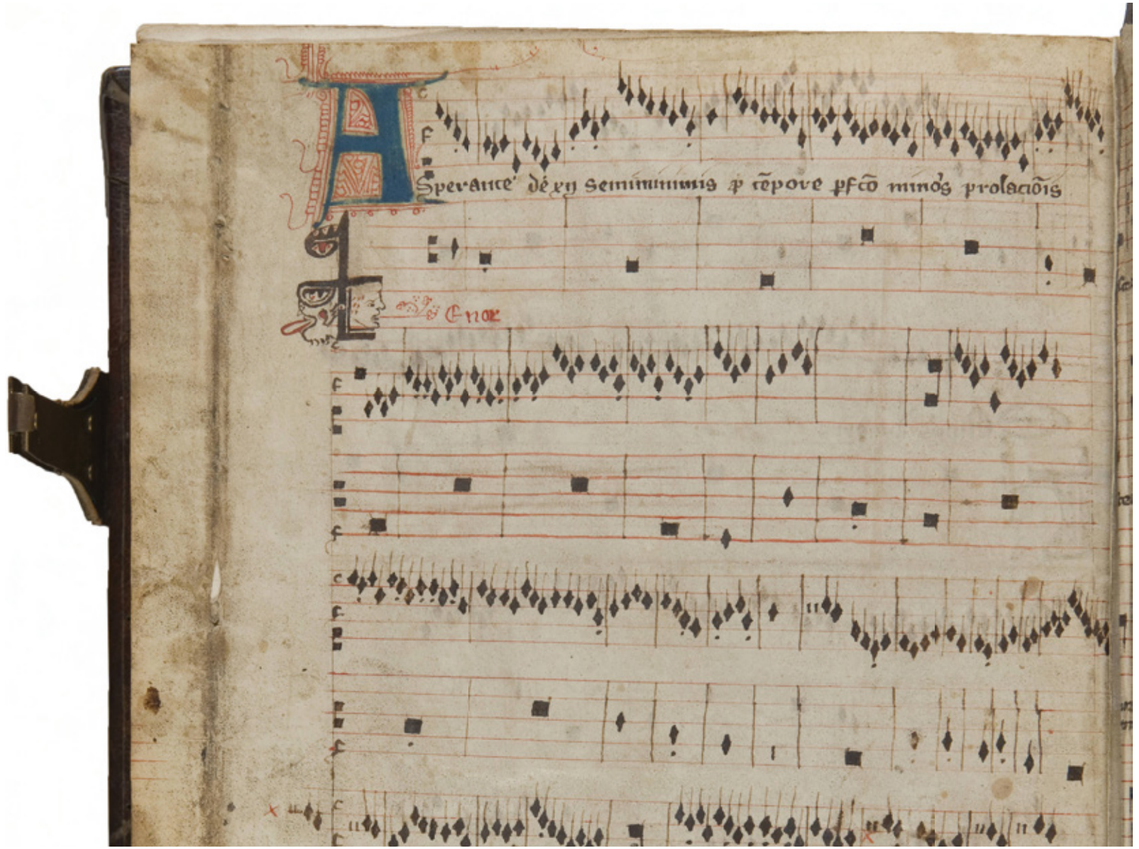

1980

# MEMBRA DISJECTA

Fragments from a thirteenth-century copy of the *Decretals* of Pope Gregory IX are used as covers for two of the manuscripts in the Christmann collection (see above, p. 49). Similar fragments of medieval manuscripts are visible in the bindings of many early modern book, where they were used as endpapers and covers, or to reinforce quires or the backing. Such vellum leaves were taken from books that had been discarded because they had been replaced by better or more recent copies, or because their contents were not relevant to their owners anymore, for example Roman Catholic liturgical and theological books as well as books on canon law, which were of no interest to Protestants. Bookbinders, however, could still put them to good use since parchment is a sturdy material and abandoned books could be bought for next to nothing. These scattered fragments, or *membra disjecta*, often contain texts, some of which have not survived in any other way. The results of a research project on *membra disjecta* in books in the UL were published in 1980 with an exhibition and a publication. Because the fragments have a function in the structure of the binding, and are also part of the book's history, they are now usually left in place. In earlier times, many of them were removed, such as a leaf donated to the Library by the Provincial Archives of Drenthe in 1895. This particular fragment originally belonged to a thirteenth-century



Latin psalter, in which many words were translated into Frisian: it is now the oldest documented example of written Frisian. Slightly younger are two double leaves, four pages, from a fourteenth-century manuscript of a Middle Dutch translation of the French chivalric romance *Partonopeus de Blois*. This text only survives in fragments from six different manuscripts. The leaves in the UL were discovered there in the nineteenth century but, unfortunately, the book from which the leaves were taken was not recorded. The leaves now serving as the front and back pastedowns of a volume printed in the 1490s contain parts of keyboard intabulations of two songs in French, 'Asperance' and 'empris domoyrs'. They are datable to the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century.



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1983

# THE PLESSNER PAPERS

The most comprehensive collection of personal papers preserved in the Library is the one that was donated by Helmuth Plessner (1892-1985). Plessner, a German philosopher and sociologist, had to flee his country in 1934 and found a position in Groningen, first as a private tutor, and then, after 1939, as *professor extraordinarius* at the recently established Sociological Institute. He was appointed Professor of Philosophy in 1946. Five years later he decided to return to Germany, where the University of Göttingen offered him a chair. Plessner kept in close contact with friends and relations in the Netherlands, and presented his personal papers to the UL in 1983. They comprise a large correspondence, drafts of papers and publications, newspaper clippings, and documents relating to his scholarly career in Groningen and in Germany. The papers of the influential theologian Gerardus van der Leeuw (1890-1950) were donated to the Library by his heirs. Van der Leeuw taught in Groningen from 1918 until his death (with an intermission of one year, just after the Second World War, when he served as Minister of Education, Arts and Sciences). Also worth mentioning are the papers of the archaeologist Albert Egges van Giffen (1884-1972) and the botanist Jan Willem Moll (1851-1933), as well as the letter collections of the historian Ubbo Emmius (1547-1625) and the physician Petrus Camper (1722-1789).






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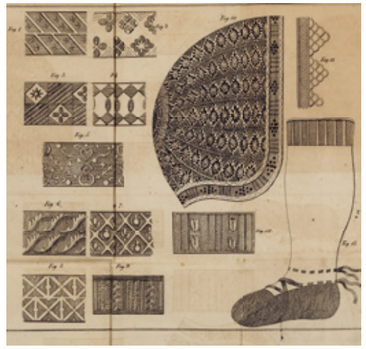
1988

# THE SCHOOL MUSEUM COLLECTION

In 1908 the Society of the School Museum at Groningen (Vereniging het Schoolmuseum te Groningen) opened a School Museum. The Society's objective was to improve the quality of teaching materials and to support teachers with information on the latest developments in their profession. To this end, it collected teaching materials and textbooks, and it also served as an advisory centre, organised refresher courses for teachers, and set up exhibitions. These activities continued after 1961 when it was renamed Northern Institute for Education and Teaching at Groningen (Noordelijk Instituut voor Opvoeding en Onderwijs te Groningen), which in its turn became part of the Advisory Centre for Education (Onderwijs Advies Centrum) in 1972. Selections from its collection of historical and current education and learning tools had already been transferred to the Library and the Groninger Museum before the Library acquired the remaining material in 1988. The School Museum collection consists of several thousands of volumes on pedagogy and psychology, teaching methods, and textbooks on a wide variety of subjects – such as reading and writing, mathematics and music, Dutch language, botany and geography, sports and games, handicraft and needlework, singing and drawing – as well as works by important education reformers. These publications give a fascinating insight in the history of education and the ever changing world of schools and their pupils.





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1990

# GIFTS FROM THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS OF THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

The Society of Friends of the University Library Groningen (Vereniging van Vrienden van de Universiteitsbibliotheek Groningen) was founded on 28 February 1990, the day on which the Library celebrated its 375th anniversary. The Society's aims are to promote gifts and bequests to the UL, and to provide financial support to acquire books and documents of special scholarly, cultural or regional importance. The annual gifts from the Society of Friends have grown into a greatly varied collection. The smallest item, *'t Oranje geslagt* (*The Orange Dynasty*), measuring only 2 x 1 cm, was printed in Groningen in the middle of the eighteenth century. Bound in red leather with gold tooling, the tiny leaves are pasted together into a leporello or concertina binding. Among the manuscripts acquired with the Friends' support are the sixteenth-century cartulary of the Aduard water authority, the *alba amicorum* of Peter Baumann (1644-1648; see above, p. 64) and of Johannes Siertsema (1749-1762), and a travel journal written in 1722 by Daniel Gerdes (1698-1765), who later became Professor of Theology in Groningen. The subject matter of the printed books is just as diverse. Publications by David Hume and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Schlegel, a beautifully illustrated book on wall paintings in Pompeii, a calendar for the year 1926 illustrated by members of the Groningen artists' association De Ploeg, and productions of private presses in the region find themselves gathered together in this collection alongside books against Socinianism, a sixteenth-century German book on architecture, an album with pictures of the city of Groningen from the nineteenth century, and a small volume with various texts printed in Groningen in 1714-1715, including an illustrated comic work *Placcaet, ende ordonnantie van het neuse-geldt* (*A Placard and Ordinance Regarding Nose-money*).







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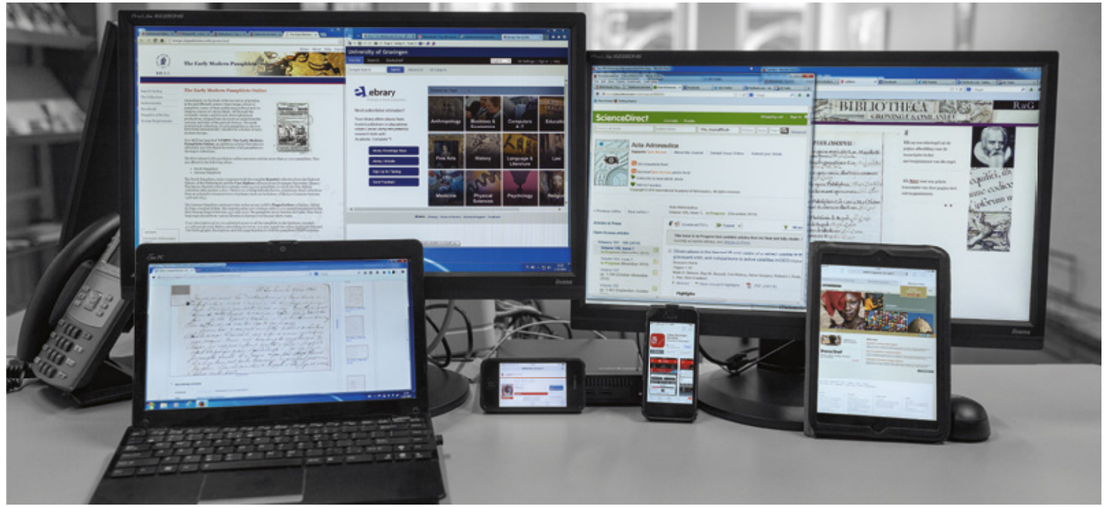
1992

# DIGITAL COLLECTIONS

The fundamental differences between printed or handwritten and digital collections is that digital ones are invisible without the appropriate electronic devices, and that most of them are not owned by the libraries who provide access to them.
In 1992, the Library created its first repository for digital publications, one for dissertations. It was followed by several others, such as those for the research data of the University's research institutions and research schools as well as those for individual Faculties as well as the publications by the Library and the Documentation Centre of Political Parties (DNPP).
In 1995, the digital library *JSTOR* started the process of digitisation, long-term preservation and presentation of huge numbers of mainly periodicals (and also some monographs), and the UL was quick to license this database. Today the list of digital collections and databases available to the Groningen academic community contains hundreds of items, from *ABC-CLIO e- books* (e-book versions of introductory reference works in history) to *ZEPHYR* (a database on mergers and acquisitions, IPO´s and venture capital deals). Among the Library's own first digital publications was the *Librorum academicorum syllabus*, the handwritten catalogue of 1619 (2004). The Library also digitises part of its collections and presents them in the image database *Facsimile*. Some of its manuscripts are also included in *MMDC* (*Mediaeval Manuscripts in Dutch Collections*) and *ABO* (*Annotated Books Online*).

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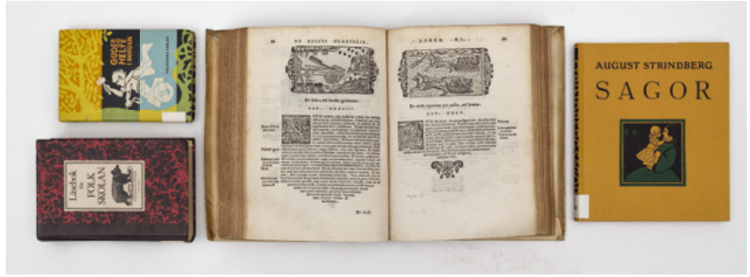
1995

# THE VAN MARKEN COLLECTION

Amy van Marken (1912-1995) taught Scandinavian Languages and Literature in Groningen from 1954 until her retirement in 1982, from 1975 as a full professor. Besides her scholarly work, she published translations and actively promoted Scandinavian culture. One of the six Groningen professors who took the initiative to found the Arctic Centre at Groningen University in 1970, she remained committed to its activities. Among the projects executed by members of this multidisciplinary centre for polar research in the Netherlands is the archaeological excavation of Smeerenburg, a seventeenth-century whalers'settlement on Spitsbergen. Van Marken bequeathed her library of some 10,000 volumes to the Library. Spitsbergen received its name from the Dutch navigator Willem Barentsz in 1596, during a voyage to discover the Northeast Passage and a shorter route to East-India. This expedition turned out disastrously. Pack ice forced the crew to abandon their severely damaged ship and to overwinter on the island of Nova Zembla. The diary of Gerrit de Veer, one of the survivors, contains illustrations of the harsh living conditions including ships hitting icebergs and hunts of polar bears. Published in 1598, the *Syllabus* records the arrival of a copy of this book in the Library in 1626. Another proof of the early interest in Groningen in the history and culture of the northern European regions is the donation made in 1644 by Martinus Schoock (1614-1669), the Professor of Logic, Physics and Practical Philosophy. This was a copy of Olaus Magnus's history of the northern peoples, *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus*, printed in Rome in 1555 and richly illustrated with woodcuts. In more recent times, a large collection of Scandinavian books was presented to the Library in 2007 by Greta Baars-Jelgersma (b. 1911), a translator of numerous literary works from Norwegian, Danish, Swedish, and Icelandic into Dutch, and the owner of a literary agency.

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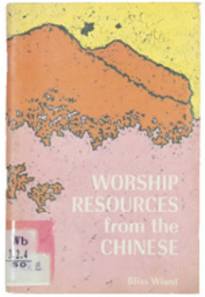
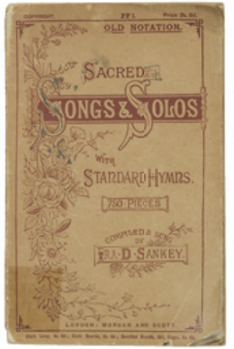
1998

# THE WIJCHERS COLLECTION

The Wijchers Collection, named after Jurriaan J.W.A. Wijchers (1914-1977), a minister in the Dutch Reformed Church, contains religious song books from between the seventeenth and the twentieth centuries as well as a theological reference library. With an estimated total of some 15,000 volumes, the collection has an international and inter-denominational character. More than half of the items that have been catalogued so far appear not to be present in other Dutch libraries. In 1998, the Wijchers family deposited the collection on loan to the University where it was accommodated in the library of the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies. Together with the Faculty library, the Wijchers Collection was transferred to the UL in 2014. The presence of many special bookbindings and numerous notes in the books made by readers and owners contribute further to the collection's significance for the study of religious reading culture. Moreover, it complements other religious research collections in Groningen such as the religious song books and service books of the Faculty of Theology and its Documentation Centre for the Material Culture and Musical Tradition of Christendom in the Netherlands, as well as the Unitarian Library (1919), the Vos Collection of Mennonitica (1926), and the Theological Library created in 1878 for the Groningen professors appointed by the Dutch Reformed Church, three collections which are kept in the Library.











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2014

# THE KOOPS COLLECTION

Many years ago, Wim R.H. Koops, who served as University Librarian from 1964 until 1990, decided to leave the legacy of his books to the UL, and he has already begun to transfer selected parts of his extensive collection. Art, literature, history, and politics are some of its core themes. A large selection of books especially on Dutch, French and German impressionist and expressionist art arrived in 2014 and it is kept together as a named collection. Besides numerous exhibition catalogues and studies on artists and their works, there are also many publications by small museums and galleries from all over Europe, ephemeral documents which are difficult for an institutional library to collect.
In the past the Library has received various other art-related collections. The Groningen Art Loving Association Pictura (Kunstlievend Genootschap Pictura) deposited its library there as a permanent loan in 1904. The Groningen Museum of Antiquities, the predecessor of the Groninger Museum, did the same in 1919. Reurt Jan Veendorp (1905-1983), an architect and the owner of brick-manufacturing companies in Groningen, bequeathed his art collection to the J.B. Scholten Fund, which in turn deposited the art works in the Groninger Museum and the supporting library in the UL.
From the bequest of Theo van Baaren (1912-1989), active as a surrealist author and artist before and after occupying the chair of the History of Religions and Egyptian Language and Literature in




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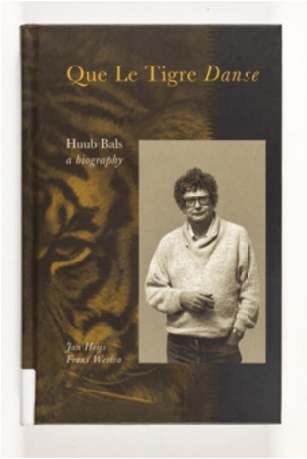
Groningen, came a collection of books on modern art and literature with a particular focus on surrealism and French literature. Van Baaren's ethnographic art collection formed the basis of the University's Anthropological Museum Gerardus van der Leeuw, which existed from 1978 until 2003, when it merged with the University Museum.
A collection comprised of numerous catalogues, specimen sheets, brochures of printing equipment, and other typographical materials from the Netherlands and other countries was acquired in 1999.
Frans Westra, an historian and the director of a Groningen film theatre, donated numerous books on film history. Thanks to his efforts, the Library could also acquire part of the film library built up by Huub Bals (1937-1988), the first director of the Rotterdam Film Festival, as well as a selection of books from the estate of Jan Heijs (1952-2006), a film producer who was also the editor of the *Filmkrant* magazine.



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