

Highlights from the NEHA Collection

Co Seegers

Soon after its foundation in 1914, the NEHA began to build up a library for the benefit of economic-historical research. In the early years, the function of the library was clearly to complement the collection of company archives. A change came in the 1920s, when a number of important collections were acquired at auctions in Antwerp, Paris and London.

The purchase of the collection of books, manuscripts and documents amassed by the Antwerp collector Josef Velle, signified both a highly important addition in academic terms and the beginning of a separate economic library. It is a specialised collection of books, pamphlets and manuscripts dealing with accountancy and the commercial sciences, and in addition, contains a wide variety of historical documents including proclamations, insurance policies, bills of exchange and merchants' correspondence. The earliest documents date from the fifteenth century. Thanks to this collection, the library gained a strong international accent. In addition, we can point to the fact that the IISH holds some important supplementary collections (the Kashnor collection is an example).

In 1930, contributions from the Book Fund, founded in 1927, and from a substantial number of companies and private donors made it possible for the library to buy large collections comprising 10,000 titles in economic history, which formed the basis for its modern book collection.

As of today, the NEHA collection numbers approximately 110,000 volumes and 2,500 periodicals. The particular strengths of the EHB are its collections in the fields of trade and commercial practice, which may be compared with such internationally-renowned collections as the Kress collection in the Baker Library of Harvard University, and the Goldsmith collection at the University of London.

In addition to collecting merchant literature, special attention has been paid to early statistics and statistical descriptions (prior to 1850). By the mid-eighteenth century, 'statistics' designated the systematic accumulation of demographic and economic data, mainly by states. In the early nineteenth

century, the meaning of 'statistics' broadened to include the discipline concerned with the collection, summary and analysis of data.

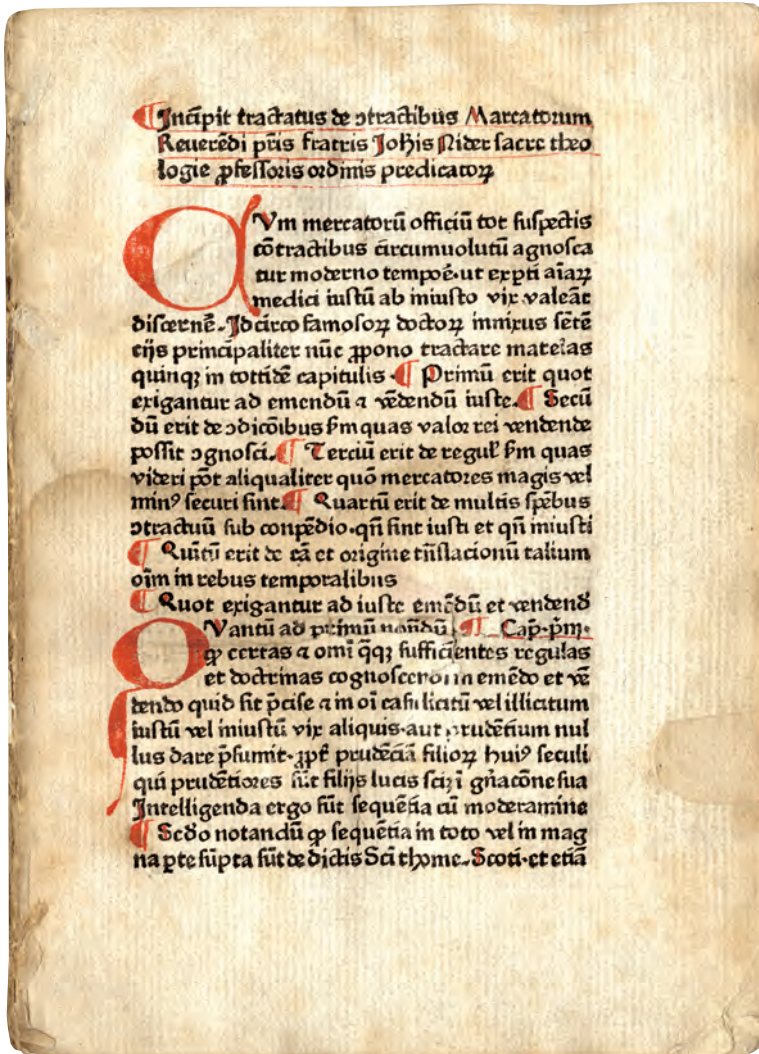
The NEHA does not confine its attention to books alone, but has also acquired printed sources such as annual reports, prospectuses, trade catalogues, price lists and other (statistical) material produced by commercial enterprises and economic organisations. The donation of the collection of annual reports from the Dutch Chambers of Commerce and Industry in the early 1980s and the Brezet collection from the Erasmus University in 2003 have rendered the library's collection the most comprehensive of its kind in the Netherlands. The collection houses documents of some 9,000 companies in the Netherlands and the Netherlands Indies.

In addition to the items described above, the NEHA also holds unique collections of manuscripts and archival material in its NEHA Special Collections (*NEHA Bijzondere Collecties*). These collections include among others the Velle collection, the Bruyard archive and the Hartkamp collections. The Special Collections comprise more than 15,000 items covering many geographical, chronological and thematic aspects of economic history, ranging from paper money, a tulip book and Japanese prints, to small archives and photographs.

From this multiplicity, sixteen items have been chosen to show the wide range and importance of the NEHA collection. The highlights will be available on the NEHA website in due course (www.neha.nl).



A brass-mounted front cover of a manuscript on trading practice by Saint Bernard of Siena (1380-1444). Titled Tractatus contractuum et restitutionum – Tractatus de emptione et venditione, known as ‘The treatise on contracts’, ca. 1431-1433, the work is one of a series of sermons first preached as one of the first, if not the very first, to offer a general survey of the field of economics [NEHA Special Collections 348 – ARCH03848].



Johannis Nider, [Tractatus de contractibus mercatorum] : [begin fol. I recto] : incipit tractatus de stractibus marcatorum reverendi patris fratris Johannis Nider sacre theologie professoris Ordinis Praedicatorum [(Coloniae : Ulric Zell 1468)]. *The oldest publication in the NEHA collection and probably the first printed discussion of business ethics known to the Western World. See also: On the Contracts of Merchants by Johannes Nider / translated by Charles H. Reeves; edited by Ronald B. Shuman (University of Oklahoma Press : Norman 1966) [NEHA EHB v1470 : 1].*



The first page of the second edition (1523) of the *Summa de Arithmetica, Geometria, proportioni et Proportionalita* written by Fra Lucas Pacioli (1445/1450-1514 or later). The Treatise on double-entry bookkeeping was first published in 1494 and contains the earliest known systematic treatise on bookkeeping [NEHA EHB 8790 fol].



Copia das carregaço de mercadorias vindas de Lisboa. A parchment-bound journal of a Portuguese colonial goods merchant in Antwerp, from 1546 to 1555. His business partners were his cousins Joam and Jorge Rodriguez in Lisbon. Family networks of merchants were essential in international trade. At the end of the journal are notes reflecting household expenses from 1551

[NEHA Special Collections 134 – ARCH03634].

Contra van de 23 May 1586

Ditto van 68.							
Ditto van 80.							
Ditto van 100.							
Olmische Fusteynen de Bale.							
Ditto Bayerische.							
Ditto Byberachische.							
Fusteynen van Auborch 1/2 Grau 1/2 swart 1/2 stuk.							
Ditto witte.							
Ditto Genitiche 1/2 grau 1/2 swart.							
Ausborsche Fusteynen Crofecs.							
Ditto half Sijde.							
Lijbsche svillighe 1. seghel		13	6				
Ditto met. 2. seghelen.		17					
Ditto met. 3. seghelen.		21					
Rau sijde Canari.		27					
Ardasse.		30					
Ardassette.		32					
Saluaticar.		33					
Tallant.		34					
Mamodes.		34					
Veneetche Sijde het pot 39 1/2		86					
Ditto colleuren.		110					
Florette swarte.							
Ditto colleuren.		45					
Orfoye.		42					
Trame.		43					
Organfina.		49					
Organfina van Napels.		54					
Ditto Orfoye.		55					
Ditto swarte 1/2 Cuffr 1/2 Poel.		52					
Bolonsche Sijde.		80					
Geneetche Sijde.		47					
Geneetche Franien.							
Rau gevrochte Sijde 1/2 Nacy Sijde 1/2 Poel van Canarien.		77					
Ditto van Ardasse.		39					
Ditto van Ardassette.		41					
Ditto van Saluaticha.		39					
Sendel cort swart grau ende tanneyt het stuk.		72	10				
Sendalen oft Sluyers.							
Grofgreyen van Turckien vier draet sijne.		6	7	51			
Ditto gemeyne sorte.							
Mochayaren Cangeante van Turckien.		20					
Leuantche Armofijnen.			27				
Talfeta van Florenfen.		5					
Ditto van Bologna.		5	7				
Lampers van Bologien.			21				
Ormesijnen van Lucha.							
Ditto van Floreyen.							
Ditto colleuren.							
Ditto Forti swarte.							
Ormesijnen van Napels 1/2.							
Ditto van 6 quert.							
Geneze Armofijnen.							
Bolonsche Satijnen.							
Ditto colleuren.							
Geneze satijnen.							
Damasten van Florenfen.							
Ditto colleuren.							
Floovvelen van Florenfen Madena regi ende dien gelijke swarte.							
Ditto colleuren.							
Lufckse colleuren.							
Geneze half Rinfortet.							
Rinfortet.							
Poyl & damy.							
Ditto twee Poil.							
Ditto drie Poil.							
Ditto sijne Fortifemo.							
Ditto colleuren.							
Sijf Gout ende Siluer van millanen te vveten.							
Gout een derdedeel Siluer.							
Notenborchs Gout ende Silnet.							
Wissel op Franckfort.							
Op Ceulen.							
Op Danlick.							
Op Lubeck.							
Op Hamborch.							
Op Emden.							
Op middelborch.							
Od Antwerpen.							
Op Rovanen.							
Op Senilia.							
Op Lisbona.							
Op Finance voor 3 maenden.							

The oldest known price current in Amsterdam, 23 May 1586. The list of commodity prices was preprinted, prices were filled in by hand. The price current is only one example from the collection started in the 1920s by N.W. Posthumus. See also: John J. McCusker and Cora Gravesteijn, *The Beginnings of Commercial and Financial Journalism. The Commodity Price Currents, Exchange Rate Current, and Money Currents of Early Modern Europe (Amsterdam 1991)*

[NEHA Special Collections 472 - ARCH03972].



Illustration of three tulips. The notes along the stems (in German) indicate the prices paid for their bulbs during Dutch tulip fever at the end of 1636: the Gouda sold for 2,100 Dutch florins, the Beste Anvaers fetched 1,400 florins and the Viceroy went for around 3,200 florins. This drawing is part of a small collection consisting of three loose sheets and a book with tulips and other flowers, all in a variety of techniques. The book contains 122 drawings by Jacob Isaacsz van Swanenburch (1571-1638) from Leyden and 16 drawings by Adriaen Jansz. Van Witvelt (ca. 1581-1638)

[NEHA Special Collections 254 – ARCH03754].

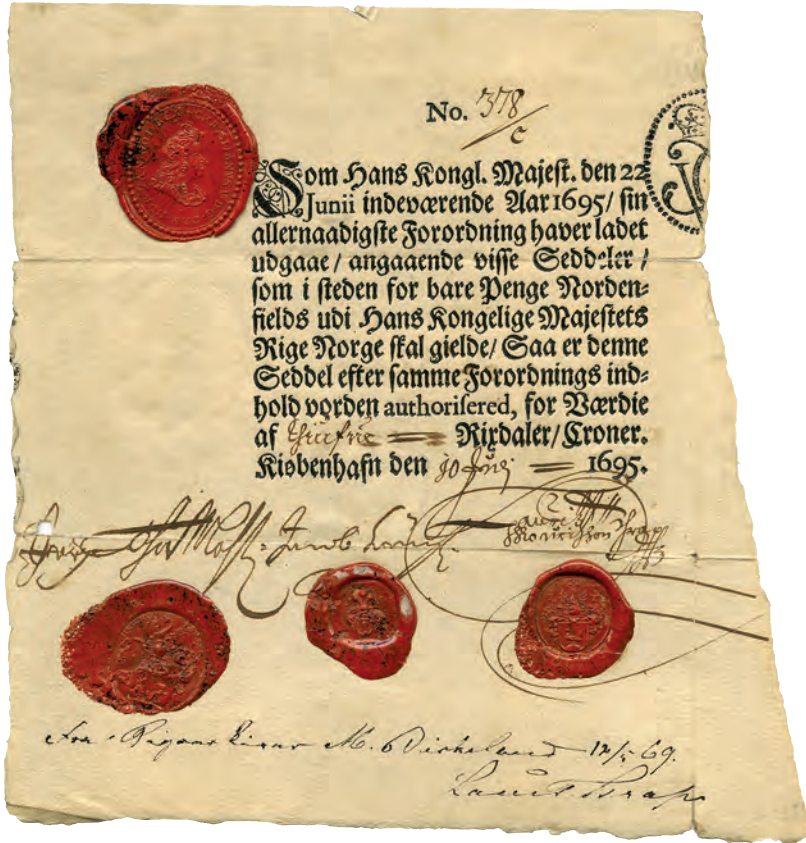


A small sample of seventeenth and eighteenth century merchant books from the Netherlands, Germany and England. They give an impression of the collection of merchant literature for daily use. The contents consist of a small almanac, interest tables, calculation tables, information on markets, postal and trade routes, prices etc. They are bound in strong parchment and they can be safely locked to protect the contents; some of them have copper locks, others can be closed with straps or by means of an envelope.

See On the Waterfront no. 5 (2002) 3.



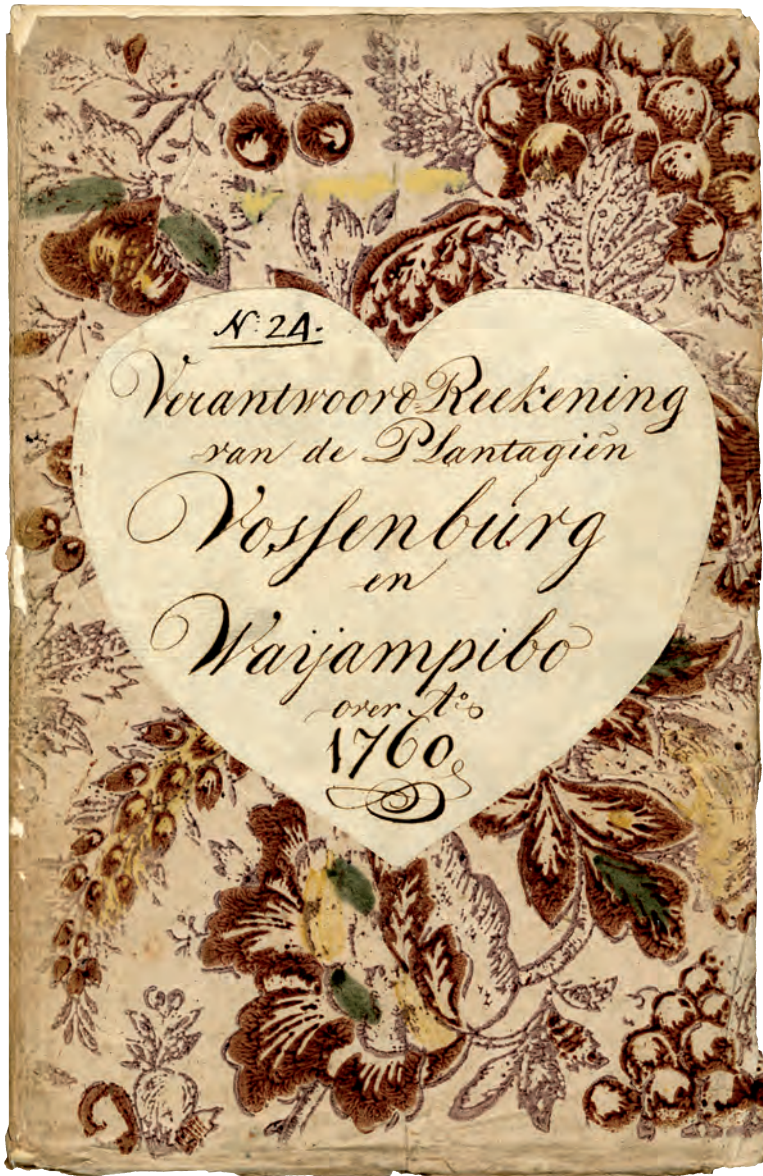
According to Johan de Witt's lijfrenten were under-utilised as a means of public finance. In 1699 he devised a questionnaire for receivers in local tax districts, asking them to list birth and death dates for beneficiaries of all the lijfrenten they had sold from 1655 onwards. Based on the outcomes De Witt was able to construct a mortality table, presented to the Staten van Holland en Westfriesland in a treatise Waerdye van Lyf-renten naer proportie van los-renten ('s Gravehage 1671). The copy presented here is part of the collection on life insurance collected by the Levensverzekeringmaatschappij De Utrecht and on loan from the Stichting Kunst & Historisch Bezit ASR Nederland [NEHA UB 6513].



Thor Møhlen was a very successful as a merchant in Bergen, Norway. In the late seventeenth century, the financial position of Norway (in a union with Denmark after 1536) had been greatly weakened. Thor Møhlen supported King Christian V financially and in return he was given the right to put paper money into circulation. In total, the money printed amounted to about 200,000 rixdaler in values ranging from 10 to 100 daler . Every note was partially filled in by hand (number, value and date) and signed by Thor Møhlen, Lauritz Mouritsen Thrup and Jacob Søfrensen. The notes had the monogram of the king and wax seals for protection. The left-hand part of each banknote was put into circulation, while the right-hand part, the tallon (elsewhere called souche), was retained. It is one of the oldest examples of paper money in Europe. Nonetheless, after five years the project ended in failure and Thor Møhlen died in 1708 in complete poverty. See also: Jan Lucassen, *Gids van de papiergeld-verzameling van het Nederlandsch Economisch-Historisch Archief. NEHA Inventarisatie Bijzondere Collecties 5* (Amsterdam 1992) [NEHA Special Collections].



“Groote Tafereel der Dwaasheid” Amsterdam 1720. The Great Mirror of Folly was published in Amsterdam within months of the 1720 economic crashes that caused turmoil in the stock markets of England, France, and the Dutch Provinces. This exceptionally large volume includes not only the regular satirical engravings, plays, poems, and prospectuses, but also ephemera and engravings not in the published version [NEHA Special Collections 255 – ARCH03755].



“Verantwoord Rekening van de Plantagien Vossenburg en Waijampibo”. *The Wayampibo plantation was founded in 1671 and in the early eighteenth century was owned by Gerard de Vree from Arnhem, who also owned Vossenburg (founded 1686). The records were acquired at an auction in 1927 [NEHA Special Collections 20 – ARCH03520].*

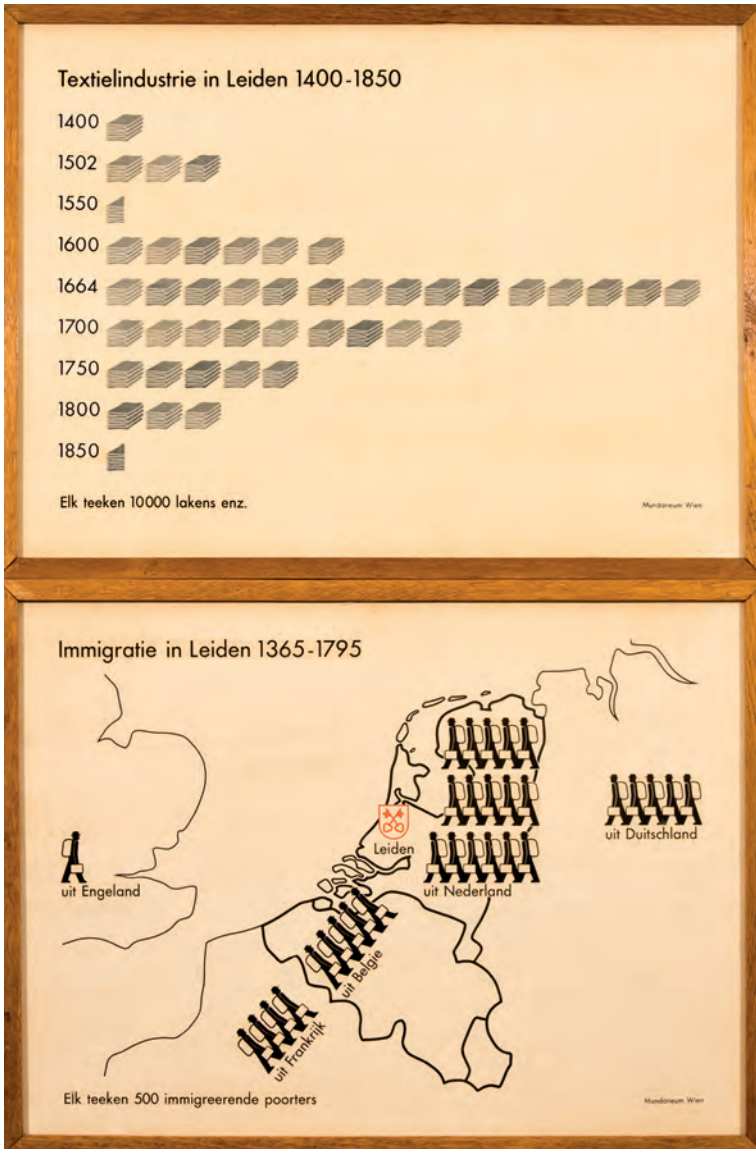
“Aperçu de la balance du Commerce de la France, relevé de la population, des finances et forces militaires des principales puissances de l’Europe, année 1791 (Overview of the balance of trade of France, population survey, finance and military forces of the major powers of Europe, 1791)”. *Table for 1791 from the Bureau de la balance. The table provides an overview of the balance of trade of France was acquired as an addition to the Bruyard Papers. See also: Loïc Charles and Guillaume Daudin, ‘Le Bureau de la balance du commerce au XVIIIe siècle’, OFCE Document du travail, 2009-05; online available at <http://www.ofce.sciences-po.fr/pdf/dtravail/WP2009-05.pdf> [NEHA Special Collections 596 (ARCH04096)].*



Japanese print entitled Oranda sen zu (illustration of a Dutch ship), 1802; printed by Bunkindō, Nagasaki. The print is one from a collection of 40 Japanese Yokohama and Nagasaki prints. On the yellow flag in the middle the emblem of the VOC (Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie), but upside down. In the text are the sizes of the ship and the distances between Japan and other parts of the world. See also: F.K. Lotgering, 'Vreemdelingen in Japan. Aantekeningen bij een verzameling van Nagasaki- en Yokohama-kleurenhoutsneden', in: Economisch- en Sociaal-Historische Jaarboek deel 41 ('s-Gravenhage 1978) 154-174 [NEHA Special Collections 477, nr. 2 – ARCH03977].



Poster of the International Exhibition of Economic History 1929, held in the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam (See page 27 in this volume). The poster was designed by H.Th. Wijdeveld and printed by De Bussy, Amsterdam [NEHA BG E11/994].



*In 1934 the *Gesellschafts- und Wirtschaftsmuseum (GeWiMu)*, founded by Otto Neurath, moved to the Netherlands. Exhibition facilities and offices were made available by N.W. Posthumus in The Hague. In close cooperation with Gerd Arntz, Neurath continued developing his picture language. In exchange for exhibition space in Amsterdam they developed a series of statistical charts based on the research by Posthumus. See Jan Lucassen, 'Gerd Arntz (1900-1988)', in *On the Waterfront*. Newsletter of the friends of the IISH No. 13 (2006) 7-8 [NEHA BG s4/7-A].*



De ontwikkeling van de electriciteitsvoorziening van Nederland tot het jaar 1925 : gedenkboek uitgegeven naar aanleiding van het 10-jarig bestaan van de Vereniging van Directeuren van Electriciteitsbedrijven in Nederland (Amsterdam 1925). *From its start in 1914 the NEHA showed a great interest in collecting memorial books of companies and economic organizations. After the transfer of the NEHA company archives to public depositories in the early 1970s even more emphasis was put on collecting this material together with annual reports and documentation of Dutch companies. Currently the collection of annual reports can be seen as the most important in the Netherlands. See also: P. Dehing en C. Seegers, Katalogus van de kollektie gedenkboeken van ondernemingen en organisaties in de Economisch-Historische Bibliotheek. NEHA Series V (Amsterdam 1988) [NEHA EHB Ned B/111/7760 fol].*