

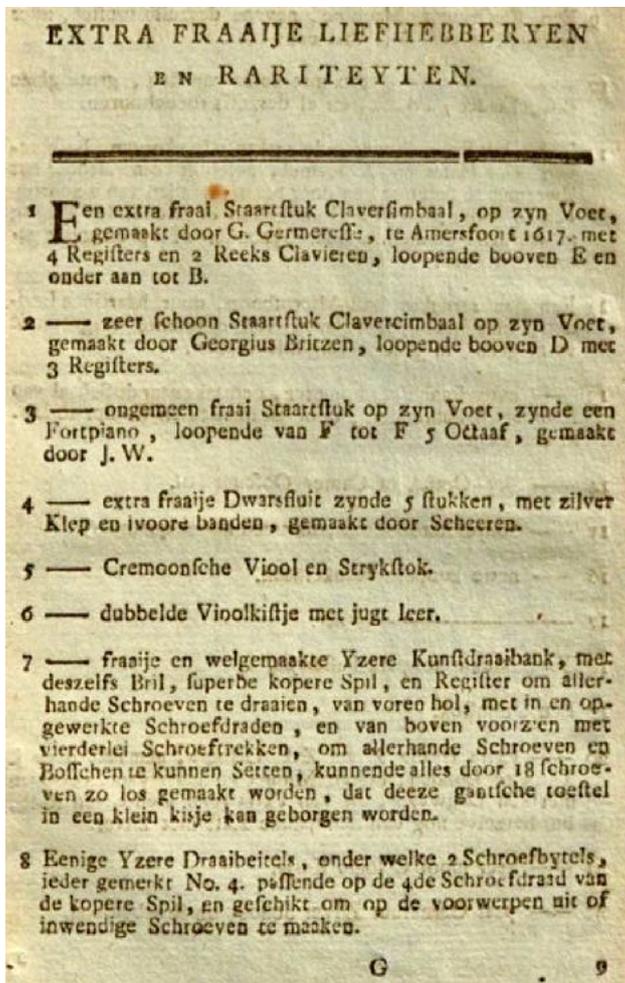


# THE GALPIN SOCIETY

FOR THE STUDY OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

NEWSLETTER NO. 61

AUTUMN 2021



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List of Instruments from the Auction  
Catalogue of the Books and Other Objects  
of Arnoldus de Does, Leiden, 18 March 1782

(see p.6)

## Instruments in Dutch Book Auctions, 1623–1850

Many catalogues of book auctions held in the Netherlands from the early seventeenth century onwards have been preserved. Moreover, in addition to books, scientific instruments (such as microscopes), weapons, drawings, paintings, and all kinds of musical instruments – both of Dutch origin and from all the important European centres of instrument making – were regularly sold in these auctions. This makes these catalogues especially interesting to musicologists, as the distribution of instruments and their prices provide an important insight into their popularity and the musical practices of the time.

While the catalogues have attracted the attention of various musicologists, it was Gerard Verloop from Schagen (Netherlands) who was the first to undertake a systematic investigation into the musical instruments recorded in the catalogues of over 5,000 auctions held in the Netherlands between 1623 and 1850. In doing so, he made an inventory not only of chamber organs (his main area of expertise), but all other musical instrument types, including musical clocks and music boxes found by him in about 600 catalogues. These Verloop transcribed in three volumes as *Het muziekinstrument op de boekenveiling / The musical instrument at the book auction: 1623–1775; 1776–1810; and 1811–1850*.

The aim of this article is to make Gerard Verloop's publication better known and more accessible, especially to non-Dutch speaking researchers. To this end, I have digitized the brochures with Verloop's permission and uploaded them to my personal website.<sup>1</sup> In this article, additional information is presented to help researchers overcome linguistic problems. While French and occasionally Latin are used, most of the catalogues are in Dutch; moreover, many of the words and concepts are no longer in common usage. The matter is complicated by the fact that at the time there was no uniform spelling, and, perhaps due to the haste in producing the catalogues, there appear to be many spelling or typesetting errors. Verloop uses [*sic*] or added a suggestion for a correction where he identified an obvious error in the spelling of a name. In the prefaces to the brochures, which have been translated into English and are added to the PDF file, Verloop outlines the method and scope of his research, but apart from a few general remarks, he did not elaborate on the information provided by the auction catalogues.

### REGISTERS

For each of the brochures, Verloop compiled a register of names: instrument makers, book sellers and previous owners of the instruments. In an explanatory note (Brochure No.1, p.51), Verloop writes:

The register of names is set up simply and is intended for practical use [rather than as a comprehensive list]. One problem is that, for various reasons, many names were spelled differently. The issue of names has been resolved to a limited extent since there are many doubtful cases, and it is not within the field of expertise of the author.

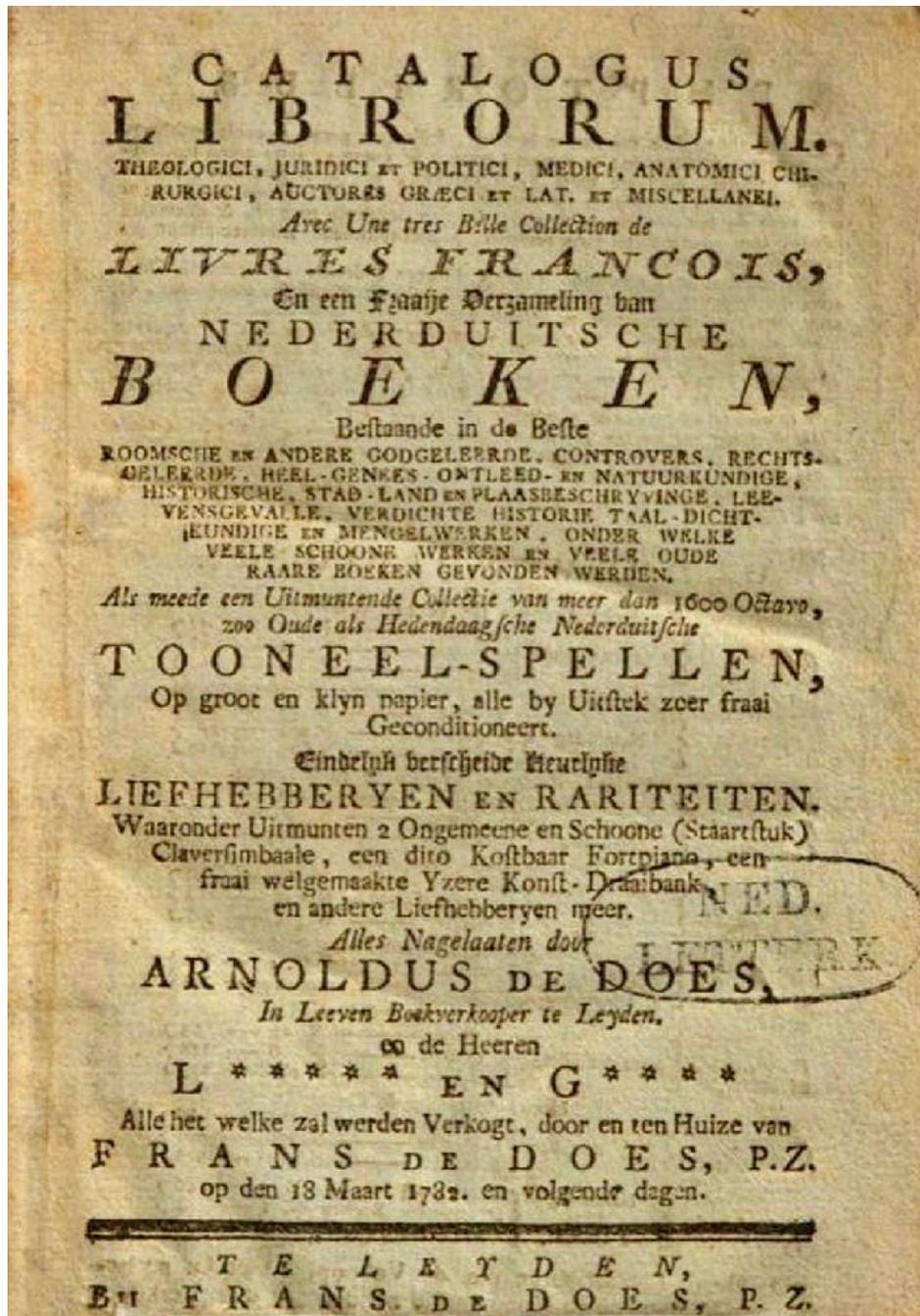
To assist researchers, I have made a new list of instrument makers, and grouped all variants together. This list is added to the PDF file. An additional index of instrument names, with variable spellings has also been created. For the *klavecimbel* (harpsichord), for instance, there are over 20 different spelling variants.

Some instrument names – albeit with minor variations – are identical in several languages, and this may also give rise to misunderstandings. For instance, for much of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the term *fluyt* (modern Dutch *fluit*) generally referred to a recorder, whereas the transverse flute was mainly named *dwaarsfluit* or *fluyt travers*. During the eighteenth century, however, *fluit* was increasingly used for the cross flute. The modern meaning of the term *fluit* is only conclusive if additional information is given, for instance the presence of extra middle joints. The names of stringed instruments may be also confusing for those not familiar with international terminology. For instance: a violin is called *viool* in Dutch and *violon* in French. Similarly, the term *bas* in modern Dutch refers to the contrabass or double bass, but in the

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<sup>1</sup> To access the files, see my website: <http://www.mcjbouterse.nl> and on the homepage click on the link to the 'Verloop-Files'. The PDF file has been made suitable for searching with the search function of Adobe Reader: press CTRL+F (for Windows) or CMD+F (for Mac). Practice shows this generally works well, but due to the manner of photographic reproduction and the existence of some special letter combinations (such as 'æ' and 'œ') there remain some minor issues.

eighteenth century the cello is often simply referred to as *bas* (in French: *basse*, short for *basse de violon*), or for a bass voice in general, separate from the instrument. Some of the instruments named in the catalogues are a real enigma. What exactly is a *sasaret*, or a *sing or zing instrument*? Was the latter perhaps a mirliton? A *speelinstrument* (playing instrument) can be everything but may have been some form of automatic instrument. A list has been compiled of all the variants, providing the current Dutch and English terminology.



**Figure 1.** Auction Catalogue of the Books and Other Objects of Arnoldus de Does, Leiden, 18 March 1782. <https://books.google.nl/books?id=OfRbTb9g7pYC&pg=PP3&lpg=PP3&dq=1782,+Arnoldus+de+Does,+catalogus&source=bl&ots=cz0z6oWVXN&sig=ACfU3U3L8sbwmrfo5zM3pwtqmeaS9x2Qaw&hl=nl&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjAjIWFqfnxAhWNr6QKHfQoDQYQ6AEwCHoECAwQAw#v=onepage&q=1782%2C%20Arnoldus%20de%20Does%2C%20catalogus&f=false>

## ARRANGEMENT OF THE BROCHURES

The details of each auction are given by Verloop in the following order:

### a. Date of the auction

The date is given as year, month, day. In a few cases, the front page of the catalogue is missing, and the precise date of the auction is not known. The modern Dutch spelling is used to indicate the months: januari, februari, maart, april, mei, juni, juli, augustus, september, oktober, november, december.

### b. Names and occupations of the owners

By default, the phrase follows the date: *Verkoping nalatenschap* (Sale of the properties, when it concerns property of a deceased person), or simply *Verkoping* (sale). In most cases, the name and occupation of the original owner is given, although sometimes only the initials are recorded. Occasionally, this information is recorded in French or Latin, even if Dutch is used for the rest of the catalogue. All editorial matter, including missing material is shown within square brackets [...]

### c. Place of the auction and details of the *boekverkoper* (bookseller) or publisher of the catalogue

Auctions were often held in the shops of booksellers, and sometimes in the homes of those whose properties were being sold. After 1800, especially in Amsterdam, auctions were increasingly held by a specialized *makelaar* (broker) or team of brokers in a *Venduhuis* or *Lokaal voor Publieke Verkoopingen* (local for public sales).

### d. Where to find musical instruments

Musical instruments are usually found at the end of the catalogues: in sections marked *Rariteiten* (rarities, curiosities), *Liefhebberijen* (hobby objects, collections), *Bijzonderheden* (curiosities), *Fraaiheden* (beautiful objects) or *Muziekinstrumenten* (musical instruments).

### e. List of instruments and their makers, and (where available) auction prices

Instrument descriptions differ markedly. Ideally, each item is precisely described, with the builder's name, materials, and a quality designation. But often such indications are missing. Descriptions of keyboard instruments are typically the most detailed, often including the number of registers and compasses. The material of woodwind instruments is often given, but this is rare for other instruments.

### f. Library or archive where the original auction catalogue is preserved or may be consulted on microfiche. The following abbreviations (sigla) are used (Brochure No. 1, p.3):

ASBLw: Archief en Stedelijke Bibliotheek Leeuwarden

BNPar: Bibliothèque Nationale, Parijs (Paris)

GAA: Gemeente-Archief Amsterdam, Collectie Veilingcatalogi (2 boxes: 1784 to 1810 and 1811 to 1839)

GAsG: Gemeente-archief 's-Gravenhage (The Hague)

GAHrl: Gemeente-archief Haarlem

GALd: Gemeentearchief Leiden GALw: Gemeente archief Leeuwarden

GARd: Gemeente-archief Rotterdam

GMSG: The (former) muziekbibliotheek of the Gemeentemuseum (now 'Kunstmuseum') in 's-Gravenhage (The Hague)

HAB: Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel (Germany)

KBsG: Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 's-Gravenhage (The Hague)

KVB: Bibliotheek Koninklijke Vereniging van het Boekenvak (Amsterdam)

MmW: Museum Meermanno Westreenianum, 's-Gravenhage (The Hague)

NLSPet: National Library, St Petersburg

OBA: Openbare Leeszaal en Bibliotheek Amsterdam

PBFr: Provinciale Bibliotheek Friesland, Leeuwarden

PBZ: Provinciale Bibliotheek van Zeeland, Middelburg

RKD: Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie

RMA: Bibliotheek Rijksmuseum Amsterdam

UBA: Universiteitsbibliotheek Amsterdam UBL: Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden

WrBO: Biblioteka Zakladu Narodowego im Ossolinskich (Wroclaw, Poland)

## PRICES OF THE INSTRUMENTS

Prices that the instruments fetched at auction are found in the margins of 68 catalogues. The prices recorded are usually for individual instruments, but also sometimes for combinations of instruments. Before 1816, the prices are given in *gulden*, *stuivers* and *centen* (guilders, stivers and cents), in which there were 16 cents in 1 stiver and 20 stivers in 1 guilder (1*f*). In the province of Zeeland, however, Zeeland pounds (£) (equivalent to 6 Dutch guilders) were used, in which there were 12 *penningen* in 1 shilling and 20 *schellingen* (shillings) in £1. In 1816, a new decimal currency system was introduced into all Dutch provinces, in which the guilder is divided into 100 cents. It is important to note that since inflation was almost non-existent at this time, it is possible to compare prices from 1680 with those of 20 or 50 years later.<sup>2</sup> By default, the prices are given between square brackets with the text *Verkocht voor* (sold for), or *Verkocht aan X voor* (sold to X for).

**Figure 2 (right).** Example from an auction catalogue dated 29 November 1773, detailing the sale of a variety of musical instruments. Gerard Verloop, *Het Muziekinstrument op de Boekenveiling. I. 1623–1775* (Schagen: Verloop, 2002), p.49.

**1773, november 29** – Verkoop nalatenschap ‘Pieter de Swart, / In zyn Ed. leeven, Architect van Zyn Doorl. Hoogheid, den Heere Prins van Oranje en Nassau, Stadhouder der vereenigde Nederlanden’, ‘door en ten Huyze van Frederik Staatman, Boekverkooper, op de Kalvermarkt in ’s Gravenhage’.

### *Muziek-Instrumenten.*

- 1 Een Clavier zynde een Staartstuk van vyf Octaven, gemaakt door Scheffers. [Verkocht voor *f* 130.–.–.]
- 2 Een Clavicordium, van onder C. tot boven F. [Verkocht voor *f* 11.–.–.]
- 3 Un Violon, fait par Jacobus Stainer in Absam. [Verkocht voor *f* 18.–.–.]
- 4 Un dito, fait par le même. [Verkocht voor *f* 14.–.–.]
- 5 Une très bonne Violon, fait à Bruxelles. [Verkocht voor *f* 13.–.–.]
- 6 Une Excellente Flut du bois d’Ebene avec trois pieces de Millieu, fait par Wedemulder. [Verkocht voor *f* 19.5.–.]
- 7 Een Fluyt met zyn Bystukken, van Palmhout, en gegaarneerd met Yvoir, door Schlegel. [Verkocht voor *f* 5.5.–.]
- 8 Een schoone Fluyt van Yvoir. [Verkocht voor *f* 9.10.–.]
- 9 Een Magnifique Fluyt gemaakt door Michel in s’Hage. [Verkocht voor *f* 12.–.–.]
- 10 Een Fluyt Travers van Schlegel. [Verkocht voor *f* 7.–.–.]

*NLSPet – Nr. 3015, fiches 4625–4626.*

<sup>2</sup> For further information on prices and inflation see Jan Luiten van Zanten, ‘Kosten van levensonderhoud en loonvorming in Holland en Oost-Nederland 1600–1850’, *Tijdschrift voor Sociale Geschiedenis* 11/4 (1985), pp.309–323.

## ISSUES OF INTERPRETATION: AN EXAMPLE

Figure 2 provides a good example of both the possibilities and problems in reading, translating, and interpreting the data from the catalogues. The introduction begins with the date of the auction, followed by *Verkoping nalatenschap* (sale of the estate) of Pieter de Swart, in his honoured life architect of His Illustrious Highness Prince of Orange and Nassau, Stadholder of the United Netherlands, by and in the house of Frederik Staatman, bookseller at the Kalvermarkt in The Hague.

Musical instrument no. 1 is described as *Een Clavier zynde een Staartstuk van vyf Octaven, gemaakt door Scheffers.* / A keyboard instrument, being a 'tail piece' (or harpsichord) of five octaves by Scheffers. The price realized by the harpsichord – 130 guilders – is very high and one of the most expensive instruments in all the eighteenth-century auction catalogues. Perhaps the instrument had an important lid painting, although such a feature is likely to have been mentioned in the catalogue. As to the maker, Johannes (Jan) Scheffer (or Scheffers), we know that he worked in The Hague, and that instruments by him are featured in advertisements published in The Hague between 1748 and 1803. There is also a Godfried Scheffer, who in 1761 advertised a harpsichord for sale in an advertisement in Amsterdam. No instruments by either maker are known to survive.<sup>3</sup>

No. 2 is a *Clavicordium* (a clavichord), but with no maker's name, which sold for the much more moderate price of 11 guilders. The compass was probably C to f<sup>3</sup>.

Nos. 3 to 6 are described in French (but why only these instruments?): Nos. 3 and 4 are two violins by the well-known Tyrolian maker Jacobus Stainer (1607–1683), but the prices of 18 and 14 guilders for which the two violins were sold seems unreasonably low. No. 5 is a *très bonne* (very good) violin, made in Brussels. Unfortunately, in these cases the year of manufacture is not given, but such details are recorded in several other auction catalogues.

Nos. 6 to 10 are *fluyten* (flutes or recorders). Nos. 6 and 7 may be interpreted as transverse flutes since they are provided with *corps de rechange*, here referred to as *de millieu* (centre pieces) and *bystukken* (extra pieces).

No. 10 is described as a *fluyt travers*, so there are no issues concerning the identification of this instrument. However, the descriptions of No. 8 as *Een schoone fluyt van yvoir* (a nice flute in ivory) and No. 9 as *Een Magnifique Fluyt gemaakt door* (a magnificently made flute) are more obtuse and might refer to recorders.

The description of the auction concludes with the name of the library where the original catalogue is preserved: the National Library in St Petersburg (Russia), identified with the sigla NLSPet. Gerard Verloop studied microfiche copies of the catalogue, probably at the library of the KVB in Amsterdam (see footnote 7).

How are we to interpret the descriptions given in the catalogues? Do they tell us something about the appearance and, in some cases, the musical qualities of the instruments being sold? Or are they no more than commercial talk? In some cases the hyperbole may have helped the instruments realise a higher price, since the flutes described as *excellente*, *schoon* and *magnifique* were sold for higher prices than the two flutes without such designations. The material from which the instruments were made may also explain the different prices: Traverso No. 6 (made of ebony) fetched 19 guilders and 5 stivers, whereas No. 7 (*palmhout*, boxwood, with ivory mounts) sold for only 5 guilders and 5 stivers.

The makers of the flutes also require careful evaluation. The maker of flute No. 6 is given as Wedemulder, for instance, but this is an enigma. Perhaps it was a misreading of Weijde-muller (or Weydemuller) whose stamp is on a traverso in the collection of the Kunstmuseum (the former Gemeentemuseum) in The Hague; unfortunately, very little is known about this maker, including where he lived. Flute No. 9 was made by *Michel in s'Hage* (s-Gravenhage, The Hague). This is the only reference to a woodwind instrument maker working in The Hague, so it is highly significant, but no further information about him has been found.

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<sup>3</sup> For further information on Jan and Godfried Scheffer see Arend Jan Gierveld, 'The harpsichord and clavichord in the Dutch Republic', *Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis* 31 (1981), pp.117–166.

However, an undated clarinet marked '(lion) J. Michel' is preserved in the Museum of Musical Instruments in Berlin (Inv. No. 2874), which may be the sole surviving example from his workshop.<sup>4</sup> Nos. 7 and 10 are described as being by Schlegel. Christian and Jeremias Schlegel (father and son) were active in Basel, Switzerland, in the first and second half of the eighteenth century respectively. However, it is not known to which member of the family the flutes should be ascribed.<sup>5</sup>

## THE PROVENANCE OF THE INSTRUMENTS

Reading the title pages of the auction catalogues could give rise to the conception that they mainly came from the estates of high-ranking and rich persons: professors and legal scholars, senior civil servants, diplomats, clergy (ministers and pastors) and a few professional musicians. However, the picture may be somewhat distorted, since while the titles and functions of men of status are recorded, the names of less affluent members of society were not recorded or only referred to by their initials. A particularly interesting topic that may be investigated via the catalogues is that of instruments owned by professional musicians, or by those people who made a living from music. Unfortunately, only a handful of auctions may be associated directly with musicians and composers. These include: the Amsterdam organist and composer Gerard Frederik Witvogel (1669–1746), the composer Albertus Groneman (1710–1778)<sup>6</sup> of The Hague; and the carillonneur Frederik Johannes Berghuys (1762–1835) of Delft. The most famous composer whose instruments are described in the sales catalogues is that of Pietro Locatelli (1695–1764), the auction for which took place on 21 August 1765: from these we learn that he owned no less than three harpsichords, including a double-manual harpsichord by Ruckers. There are also one or two music dealers, whose stocks of instruments are described. It should be stressed, however, that musical instruments were not the main focus of the sales: they only came up for sale because there were also – or even mainly – books in the auction.

The auction with the largest number of musical instruments concerns that of Nicolas Selhof (1680–1758), an important figure in the music life of The Hague: he started a business in 1713 as a music bookseller, and in 1725 formed a 'Collegium musicum perpetuum'. The music section of the catalogue comprises more than 150 pages, with just under 3,000 pieces of music listed. The section on musical instruments is, however, no less impressive: 46 violins, 13 cellos, 3 violas, 1 double bass and 1 lute, 3 violas d'amour, 6 violas dessus, 34 violas da gamba, 12 harpsichords and spinets, and 46 wind instruments. This was a trading stock of instruments of well-known makers from all over Europe.<sup>7</sup> The auction of Selhof's stock of instruments was held by A. Moetjens, a bookseller in The Hague, on 30 May 1759. For some reason, the catalogue was included within the catalogue that refers to goods bequeathed by Hugo van Son (24 November 1760). The title page of the 1759 Selhof catalogue was perhaps overlooked by Verloop, so that the connection with Nicolas Selhof and the name of Selhof are missing from the brochures. For the new registers, the auction is referred to as '1760/1759'.

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<sup>4</sup> William Waterhouse, *The New Langwill Index* (London: Tony Bingham, 1993), p.263.

<sup>5</sup> Waterhouse (1993), p.354.

<sup>6</sup> Following the death of his wife, Groneman sold various instruments in 1756. The most conspicuous of these was a *beroemde clavecimbal met twee clavieren* (a famous harpsichord with two manuals) by Johannes Ruckers, which sold for extremely high price of 500 guilders, by far the most expensive instrument in all the catalogues. For further information, see Rudolf Rasch, 'Groneman, Albertus', in *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart (MGG)*, vol.8, p.73.

<sup>7</sup> See also Hyatt King, *Catalogue of the music library, instruments and other property of Nicolas Selhof, sold in The Hague, 1759* (Amsterdam: Frits Knuf, 1973), with a facsimile of the catalogue; Jan Bouterse, 'The Selhof auction (1759)', *FoMRHI Quarterly* 89 (1997), pp.23–26; and Rudolf Rasch, 'Aux adresses ordinaires, Waar muziek te koop was in de Nederlandse republiek' in *Jaarboek voor Nederlandse boekgeschiedenis. Jaargang 8* (2001), pp.99–112.

## LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

We cannot be certain that all the instruments were manufactured by the makers named in the catalogues. The large number of variations in the spelling of some makers' names (including 12 variants for the name Stradivarius) suggests that there may have been forgeries. Some instruments are made 'in de smaak van' or 'in de stijl van' (in the style of). As stated above, Gerard Verloop did not elaborate on the information contained within the auction catalogues, apart from a few general remarks in the prefaces. One remark, from the first Brochure (in translation) reads:

From the instruments listed in the sale catalogues we may draw some qualitative conclusions, but not so much about their numbers: we must be aware that several instruments occurred more than once at different sales. It is hardly possible to check the reliability of the provenance of the instruments. Forgeries were not uncommon. Because of the modest prices, especially for harpsichords and string instruments, forgeries were seemingly not profitable and were presumably exceptions. It is more likely that forgeries or pseudo forgeries took place at the source, in the workshop of the original maker, which can be deduced from the sometimes strange descriptions. The Dutch auctioneers, not always being experts in this field, had to rely on those descriptions and acted in good faith; but there must have been some dead wood between them.

Verloop should be acknowledged for his meticulous work on the catalogues, although this should not prevent scholars from further research or from consulting the original sources where possible. Unfortunately, only a very limited number of catalogues uploaded as facsimiles may be found on the internet.<sup>8</sup>

This article is meant as a stimulus and a guide for other people who wish to carry out further research into the historical auction catalogues. That is not an easy job: the heterogeneous descriptions and the limited information concerning the condition of the instruments are obstacles when assessing the data and framing conclusions. As Verloop suggests in the preface to the first brochure, these catalogues have the potential to shed further light on musical instrument making as well as musical performance of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

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Art Sales Catalogues online, available at: <https://primarysources.brillonline.com/>

Frits Lugt, *Répertoire de ventes publiques intéressant de l'art ou la curiosité*, 1600–1825 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1938). Frits Lugt's publications may be searched at: <https://www.delpher.nl/nl/boeken>

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<sup>8</sup> See the Art Sales Catalogues Online database (available at: <https://primarysources.brillonline.com/>), where it is possible to view several complete catalogues of the art auctions. The catalogues of the book auctions have largely been collected by the KVB (Koninklijke Vereniging voor het Boekenvak / Royal Association of the Book Trade). The library of the KVB is housed at the University of Amsterdam. In addition to the original catalogues, it is also possible to consult microfiches of catalogues preserved elsewhere.