

Editorial

The (New) Hollstein catalogues

AMONG ART-HISTORICAL reference books, Hollstein's *Dutch & Flemish etchings, engravings and woodcuts ca.1450–1700* is one of the most famous and successful. Some 150 volumes have been published: seventy-two between 1948 and 2007 in the original series covering printmakers in alphabetical order and, from 1993, seventy-nine in the so-called New Hollstein series devoted to individual printmakers, designers and print publishers. New to the latter is the emphasis on print designers such as Maarten van Heemskerck, Johannes Stradanus and Frans Floris, reproductive engravers such as Cornelis Cort, Crispijn de Passe, the Collaerts dynasty and the Wierix family, and publishers such as Philips Galle and the De Jode dynasty. The most recent volumes, devoted to Hendrick Goltzius and Rembrandt, are reviewed in this issue on p.675.

First published in 1948, the series was the initiative of the German print specialist F.W.H. Hollstein (1888–1957), whose knowledge was accumulated as a dealer in the salerooms in the 1920s and 1930s and who in 1937 was forced to move to Amsterdam, where he compiled his catalogues on the basis of the existing literature and his notes taken from auction catalogues etc. At his death in 1957, fourteen volumes (through to Ossenbeek) had been published. The work of major printmakers was well illustrated, but that of reproductive printmakers was included mostly in the form of (often incomplete) lists largely based on the holdings of the Rijksprentenkabinet, Amsterdam. The catalogues were greeted with enthusiasm, and the H(ollstein) numbering was adopted in sale catalogues and for the ordering of prints in major printrooms, along with the traditional B(artsch) numbers. Its success encouraged the publication, from 1953, of a series devoted to *German engravings, etchings and woodcuts ca.1400–1700*, of which five volumes (A to Coriolanus) were compiled by Hollstein himself.

When Hollstein died in 1957 both series came to a virtual standstill. Out of admiration for its initiator, the curator and later Director of the Rijksprentenkabinet, Karel G. Boon, took over and managed to improve the quality of the series, clearly reflected in the two volumes devoted to Rembrandt by Boon and Christopher White (1969), based on the major European and American printrooms, which described impressions more precisely, mentioning plate tone and special supports such as Japanese paper and parchment. From the late 1970s continuity of the Dutch series was ensured by Boon and Dieuwke de Hoop Scheffer and a new generation of young compilers who consulted the holdings of major European printrooms. More than fifty well-illustrated volumes covering the *œuvres* of etchers and (wood) engravers from Jan Saenredam to Anthony van Zylvelt appeared between 1975 and 2005, at an average of two volumes per year.

When in the early 1990s the Dutch Hollstein was nearing completion, it was felt that the series was not as consistent as it should be. The result was the New Hollstein, published from 1993 onwards, not in alphabetical order but each volume (or set) devoted to one printmaker, designer or publisher, fully illustrated and often preceded by an introductory essay. They are published in close collaboration with the Rijksprentenkabinet, which supplied many of the illustrations, while most of the editorial

work is undertaken by its staff: Ger Luijten (since 2010 Director of the Fondation Custodia, Paris) and Huigen Leeflang. Some volumes harness research carried out over many years (Ilja Veldman on Van Heemskerck and Dirck Volckertsz Coornhert and Manfred Sellink on Philips Galle), while others were compiled by scholars especially employed by the publisher.

Most printmakers and designers catalogued in the New Hollstein had not been well treated in earlier volumes. Recent volumes catalogue the work of later sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century reproductive engravers. In the case of major *peintre-graveurs* who had not fared well in earlier volumes, such as Lucas van Leyden and Jan Muller, the New Hollstein offered the possibility of incorporating new research into watermarks, which can now tell us a good deal about the dating of various states. Volumes devoted to prints after Rubens and those published by the De Jode dynasty are in preparation. But there is still a pressing need to publish volumes on prints by fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century monogrammists and on the woodcuts of Jacob Cornelisz, to give two examples.

Since the 1970s the German Hollstein has developed more or less along similar lines. Some one hundred volumes have appeared: seventy-two in the regular series, and, from 2003, twenty-four in the New Hollstein series (including eight on Wenceslaus Hollar). The success of both series led to the recent initiative by the Bibliothèque nationale to start, in collaboration with the Hollstein publisher and editors, a comparable series for French printmakers, whose work has from the 1930s onwards been irregularly catalogued in the Bibliothèque nationale's *Inventaire du fonds français*. This can only reinforce Hollstein's position as the pre-eminent reference tool in the field.

In the 1980s Abaris Books managed to publish in a short time fifty volumes of *The Illustrated Bartsch* (TIB), edited by Walter L. Strauss (1922–88), with (often rather poor) illustrations of all the prints listed in Adam von Bartsch's unillustrated *Le peintre graveur* (1803–21). They reflect Bartsch's wide-ranging approach in terms of schools and include scholarly 'commentary' volumes, as well as volumes devoted to printmakers not catalogued by Bartsch. Later volumes initially partly overlapped with the scope of the New Hollstein (Coornhert in 1991, Waterloo in 1992 and the Sadeler family in nine volumes between 1997 and 2012). Since production of TIB has slowed down, the editors seem to avoid such overlap and to concentrate on Italian printmakers, early single-leaf woodcuts and woodcut illustrations etc.

Over the last decades the publication of the Hollstein volumes was possible only through the considerable investments of a private publisher, who had to recuperate his costs through the sale of the books. Thus far this prevented their online publication (and the possibility of updating and correcting). The current model at least ensures a relatively sound financial footing, but, as this type of information is so eminently suited to the Internet, one would hope that, perhaps using a moving wall, the rich contents could be made available online. The scope of such a virtual printroom should perhaps be broadened to include printmaking from other countries. Such an ideal could only be realised in close collaboration with the world's major printrooms. Although free online access to high-resolution images of the prints in collections such as those in London and Amsterdam is now well established, in-depth information is often not available on such platforms. Hollstein would be in a unique position to provide a single online access point that, more importantly, provides an intellectual and art-historical context.