

THEATRUM ORBIS LIBRORUM

*Liber Amicorum presented to
Nico Israel on the occasion
of his seventieth birthday*

Edited by
Ton Croiset van Uchelen,
Koert van der Horst and
Günter Schilder

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Nico Israel, Ernst Crone and Pedro de Medina's
De Zeevaart oft Conste van ter Zee te varen

Having been asked to contribute to this *Liber Amicorum*, I checked to see how many items were acquired from Nico Israel over the years by the Nederlands Scheepvaart Museum in Amsterdam. I discovered that the total outnumbers a hundred and consists of books, manuscripts, charts, maps and a single instrument. As the diversity of these acquisitions will not allow for a homogeneous contribution, I decided to pick out one object, a book, of which I know that Nico Israel has special memories. The book in question did not come to the Museum directly from Israel, but as part of the library of the late Dr Ernst Crone, which was left to the Museum in 1975.

Dr Ernst Crone (1891-1975) came from a family of Amsterdam merchants. Contrary to the family tradition, Ernst Crone did not join the family firm of H.G.Th. Crone & Co., but was trained as a teacher of navigation. In his unpublished memoirs he proudly wrote that he was the first Crone to obtain a school certificate.¹ With this, he taught navigation at the Amsterdam Nautical School in 1916-17. Soon he became interested in the history of navigation and, starting in 1916, a steady flow of publications on this subject came from his pen, not to cease until shortly before this death. Simultaneously he collected antique navigational instruments. His first purchase dates from 1911 and was made at an auction at Frederik Muller's in Amsterdam. It consisted of an octant by Pieter Holm dated 1750 and a nineteenth-century hanging compass.

When, as Crone recalls, it was no longer possible to obtain interesting navigational instruments at a reasonable price, he started collecting Dutch navigational manuals. Before the Second World War the main suppliers to his growing library were Martinus Nijhoff in The Hague, the Amsterdam antiquarian booksellers R.W.P. de Vries and Menno Hertzberger, Maggs Bros. Ltd. and Goldschmidt in London and Hiersemann in Leipzig. Crone would place an order for a book with these dealers and in most cases, sooner or later, the requested item would turn up. Active collecting in the same field by the American Henry C. Taylor and the founding of the National Maritime Museum in London in 1934 were, according to Crone, the reasons that Maggs Bros. made fewer and fewer offers which Crone could meet. After the Second World War the contact with Maggs Bros. was not reestablished and Crone turned to another source to satisfy his collector's appetite. It soon became apparent that Nico Israel was very capable and reliable when it came to finding editions of rare books and



1. Title-page of the 1545 Spanish edition of *Arte de navegar* by Pedro de Medina.
Photograph: Nederlands Scheepvaart Museum, Amsterdam

it was Israel who became the main supplier for the Crone library and a personal friend.

Ernst Crone became one of the main benefactors of the Scheepvaart Museum in Amsterdam. From 1927 onwards he was a Trustee and from 1938-67 he was Chairman of the Board of Trustees. His position as a Trustee could have given cause for conflict with his private collectorship. Rather than allowing this to happen, an agreement was made between Crone and the Museum. Whenever an important navigational manual were to turn up, which both Crone and the Museum wanted for their libraries, a consultation was to take place between the collector and the Director of the Museum. Often Crone would be the buyer as the Museum was then an unsubsidised private institution. The little money available for acquisition had to be spent with great care. It was also agreed that the Museum would not buy books already present in the Crone Library. When, eventually, the two libraries would come to be united, and there was no doubt that one day this would happen, a large library on the history of navigation would result. The merger was effected after the death of Ernst Crone when, with the help of Nico Israel, the Crone Library was sorted and valued before being transferred to the Museum.

The books of which Crone was proudest were those by Pedro de Medina. The *Arte de Navegar* published in Valladolid in 1545 (ill. 1) and the *Regimiento de Navegacion* published in Seville in 1552 are both in the Crone Library. As early as 1914 Crone owned the copy of the *Arte* and the extremely rare *Regimiento* was bought from Maggs Bros. in 1939 at which time only one copy of this edition was recorded.²

The *Arte de Navegar* has been of great importance for spreading the art of navigation in Europe. It was translated into French, Italian, English and Dutch. In an appendix to the article I give a survey of the different editions. The German translation, of which scholars including Crone write, is a ghost as has been sufficiently argued by Wolfgang Köberer.³ The first edition of the *Arte* in Dutch appeared in 1580 in Antwerp (ill. 2). For many years it probably was the most important navigation book in Dutch, although not the only one.⁴ A Dutch translation of *A Regiment for the Sea* by William Bourne appeared in 1594 and saw two reprints. The *Compendio de la Arte de Navegar* by Rodrigo Zamorano was printed in Dutch in 1598. The appearance of the *Arte* in Dutch marked the eve of Dutch maritime expansion beyond European waters. Within the following ten years the Dutch discovered the route to the East Indies and established their commercial relationship with the Archipelago. The increase of maritime activity called for sophisticated methods of navigation and more knowledge. The only manual on this subject in Dutch prior to 1580 was a booklet by Cornelis Anthonisz: *Onderwijsinghe vander zee/om stuurmanschap te leeren*. The first edition appeared in Amsterdam around 1544. No copy of this book remains, only one of the third edition, dating from 1558, is known to have survived and belongs to the Henry C. Taylor Library.⁵ Unlike De Medina's *Arte* the booklet by Cornelis Anthonisz did not contain enough information for

De Zeevaert/

Oft

Conste van ter Zee te varen, vanden
Excellenten Pilote M.^{ter} PEETER
de Medina Spaignaert.

Inde welcke niet alleene de Regels, Secreten, Practijcken, en constige Instrumenten
der seluer Consten begrepē sijn: Maer ooc de clare ende oprechte fundamenten
der Astronomijen, ende gantschen loop des Hemels, op d'alder lichtste ende
duydelijcste verclaert worden.

Allen Cooplieden / Piloten / Schippers / ende anderen Lief-hebbers der
Astronomijen tot nut ende dienst: Dit den Spaensche ende Fran-
sopsche in onse Nederduytsche tale ouergheset / ende met
Annotatiē verciert / by M.^r Merten Eueraert Brug.

Met noch een ander nieuwe Onderwijsinghe, op de principaelste
punten der Navigatien, van MICHEL
COIGNET.



T' HANTVERPEN,
By Hendrick Hendricksen / op onser Vrouwen Kerckhof/
inde Velle-bloeme. ANNO 1580.
Met Co.Ma. u Gratie ende Priuilegie.

2. Title-page of the 1580 Dutch edition of *De Zeevaert oft Conste van ter Zee te varen* by Pedro de Medina. This book was bought from Nico Israel by Ernst Crone and is now in the Library of the Nederlands Scheepvaart Museum, Amsterdam.
Photograph: Nederlands Scheepvaart Museum, Amsterdam

a seaman to undertake an ocean voyage. It was meant for navigation in European waters.

The title of the first Dutch edition of the *Arte de Navegar* is *De Zeevaart oft Conste van ter Zee te varen, van den Excellenten Pilote M^{ter} Peeter de Medina Spaignaert*. It was published by Hendrick Hendricksen in Antwerp and translated by Maarten Everaert Brug, a mathematician, who also translated Zamorano's manual. Everaert used the original Spanish edition and also the 1554 French edition. It was dedicated to Archduke Mathias of Austria, who was Governor of The Netherlands between 1577 and 1581. It was published together with a manual in Dutch by Michiel Coignet, entitled *Nieuwe Onderwijsinghe op de Principaelste Puncten der Zeevaart* (Antwerp 1580) (ill. 3). The author was an Antwerp mathematician who wrote the book specially as an appendix to that of De Medina. It contained basic navigational information written in a manner comprehensible to seamen.⁶ The Dutch De Medina, with the appendix by Coignet, was reprinted three times, in 1589, 1592 and 1598. These editions were published by Cornelis Claesz in Amsterdam. After Antwerp had been occupied by Spanish troops and the Dutch blocked the river Scheld in 1585, commercial, cultural and scientific life moved North and settled in Amsterdam, bringing wealth, prosperity and expansion to that city. There is no difference between the contents of the four editions, apart from the omission of the dedication in the later editions. Among the still existing copies of the first edition is one kept in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. It was left on the island of Novaya Zemlya in 1597 after the successful hibernation of Willem Barentsz and his men and was recovered, badly damaged, by the Norwegian captain Elling Carlson in 1871.⁷

The first edition of the Dutch De Medina owned by Crone, was acquired from Nico Israel. Israel is probably the only antiquarian bookseller ever to have had three copies of the rare first edition. The others were sold to the Frits Lugt Collection in Paris and, more recently, to the library of the Maritiem Museum 'Prins Hendrik' in Rotterdam.

When Crone bought his first edition he already owned a copy of the fourth edition of 1598. In his memoirs he explains how he acquired that copy. In 1926 the library of Jonkheer J.W. Six van Vromade was to be auctioned in The Hague. Among the books was a 1598 edition of De Medina. Crone was determined to buy it but was informed by the Director of the Scheepvaart Museum W. Voorbeijtel Cannenburg that W.A. Engelbrecht in Rotterdam was also bent on getting that book. Engelbrecht became an important benefactor of the Maritiem Museum 'Prins Hendrik' in Rotterdam when, after his death, his large and important collection of charts, atlases and navigational manuals was left to that Museum. Although both he and Crone collected in the same field, they rarely crossed swords. The opportunity to buy a Dutch De Medina was such a rare occasion. Crone learned that Engelbrecht was prepared to pay no less than f 1,400 for the book, then a large sum of money. With this Engelbrecht hoped to outprice Crone. The latter, however, wanted to avoid a confrontation in the auction room which would almost certainly have led to a fancy price. Through

Nieuwe Onderwijninghe / op de principaelste puncten der Zee-vaert:

*Inhoudende diuersche nootelijke regulen, Constighe practijcken, ende sonder-
linghe bequame Instrumenten, die alle Piloten, Stierlieden, ende andere,
die daghelijcx de Zee hanteren, vastelijcken behooren te verstaen.*

**Item een lichte/maer sekere ende perfecte maniere / om Oost
ende West te varen/d'welck tot noch toe allen
Piloten onbekent is gheweest.**

**Nu nieuwelijcken eerst (wt de conste van Mathematica)
ghepractiseert, ende by een vergadert,**

Deur

MICHIEL COIGNET.

Pietate,



T'HANTVERPEN,

By Heyndrick Heyndricksen,

ANNO 1580.

Met Co. Mats. Gratie ende Priuilegie.

3. Title-page of Michiel Coignet, *Nieuwe Onderwijninghe op de principaelste puncten der Zee-vaert* (Antwerp 1580). Photograph: Nederlands Scheepvaart Museum, Amsterdam

the intermediary of Voorbeijtel Cannenburg he proposed to Engelbrecht that they should buy the book jointly and then present it to the Scheepvaart Museum where there was no copy of this book. Engelbrecht agreed and the book was bought by Voorbeijtel Cannenburg at the auction for f 140, only ten percent of the sum Engelbrecht had been prepared to spend. Many years later another copy of the 1598 edition came on the market. Crone, still without a Dutch De Medina, offered Engelbrecht half of f 140 for the right to buy this copy. Engelbrecht agreed and, at last, Crone became the owner of a Dutch De Medina. Besides the 1580 Dutch edition, Nico Israel also sold Crone a copy of the 1609 Italian edition and a copy of the 1628 French edition of De Medina's *Arte de Navegar*, bringing his grand total of editions by the Spanish author to eleven.

APPENDIX

List of editions of the *Arte de Navegar* by Pedro de Medina⁸

An asterisk (*) indicates that the editions are in the collection of the Nederlands Scheepvaart Museum, Amsterdam.

Spanish	French	Italian	Dutch	English
1545*				
	1553			
	1554*	1554*		
		1555*		
	1561			
	1569*			
	1573			
	1576*			
	1577*			
	1579			
			1580* ⁹	
				1581
			1589 ¹⁰	
			1592 ¹¹	
				1595
			1598* ¹²	
	1602*			
	1607			
		1609*		
	1615			
	1618*			
	1628*			
	1633			

NOTES

- 1 The information on Ernst Crone is based on his memoirs which are, in typescript, in the library of the Nederlands Scheepvaart Museum in Amsterdam under the title *Herinneringen op het gebied van de zeilsport, van de navigatie en van de ontwikkeling van zijn verzameling nautische instrumenten en boeken betrekking hebbende op de stuurmanskunst* (Bergen c. 1972); shelf-mark J. 535.
- 2 In the Museo Naval in Madrid.
- 3 *Das rechte Fundament der Seefahrt. Deutsche Beiträge zur Geschichte der Navigation*, ed. W. Köberer (Hamburg 1982), p. 59.
- 4 C.A. Davids, 'Van Anthonisz. tot Lastman. Navigatieboeken in Nederland in de zestiende en het begin van de zeventiende eeuw', in: *Lucas Jansz. Waghenaer van Enckhuysen. De maritieme cartografie in de Nederlanden in de zestiende en het begin van de zeventiende eeuw* (Enkhuizen 1984), pp. 73-88.
- 5 John S. Keabian, *The Henry C. Taylor Collection* (New Haven, 1971).
- 6 F. van Cleempunt, 'Michiel Coignet. Een Antwerps wis- en zeevaartkundige uit de 16e eeuw', in: *Mededelingen Marine Academie*, 23 (1973-5), pp. 112-48.
- 7 Ernst Crone, 'De vondst op Nova Zembla. Een hernieuwd onderzoek der navigatie-instrumenten', in: *Bulletin Rijksmuseum*, 14 (1966), pp. 71-85.
- 8 For the compilation of this appendix the following publications have been consulted: *Bibliotheca Belgica* (Gand 1880-1923); Jean Polak, *Bibliographie maritime française depuis les temps les plus reculés jusqu'à 1914* (Grenoble 1924); Francisco Vindel, *Pedro de Medina y su 'Libro de Grandezos y cosas memorables de España. Descripción ilustrada con facsimiles y notas sobre esta obra, con una pequeña biografía y bibliografía'* (Madrid 1927); Ernst Crone, 'Pedro de Medina, zijn leerboek der stuurmanskunst en zijn invloed op de ontwikkeling van de cartografie in de lage landen', in: *Tijdschrift van het Koninklijk Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap*, 70, 2 (1953), pp. 201-6; Crone, op. cit. (n. 7).
- 9 Copies of this edition are in: Nederlands Scheepvaart Museum, Amsterdam; Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; City Library, Antwerp; unknown collection in Berlin, seen by Crone; Royal Library, Brussels; University Library, Louvain; Collection Frits Lugt, Paris; Maritiem Museum 'Prins Hendrik', Rotterdam.
- 10 Copies of this edition are in: University Library, Amsterdam; University Library, Ghent.
- 11 Copies of this edition are in: University Library, Amsterdam; Public Library, Turnhout; University Library, Utrecht.
- 12 Copies of this edition are in: Koninklijke Academie van Wetenschappen, Amsterdam; Nederlands Scheepvaart Museum, Amsterdam; University Library, Amsterdam; Maritiem Museum 'Prins Hendrik', Rotterdam; University Library, Utrecht.