III. Principles of Selection of Items

Included in the Catalogue and Method of Organization and Description Employed

1 Types of materials listed

All works by Erasmus, and works edited by or annotated by Erasmus (with others or not) in the original languages, i.e. Latin but in a few instances Greek, published before 1700. Exceptions: a few facsimile reprints of early editions and xerox copies are also included, and so indicated, and of course we list the Leyden Opera omnia.

All works by Erasmus in vernacular translations from the sixteenth century to 1970, in the Centre's collection. If these are in xerox, it is so indicated.

Thus not included are: editions of his works in Latin since 1700, any works containing material on Erasmus, critical, biographical or otherwise, no matter how rare, early or useful, and no photographic copies of manuscripts, though a few are in the Centre.

2 The most basic bibliographies referred to

a. van der Haeghen, Bibliotheca Erasmiana, Gent, 1893; photographic reprint: Nieuwkoop 1961

In this book, all primary texts are listed by date of printing under standard titles of works, and for the individual editions merely a very brief title is provided with place, printer, date and size. Those editions whose date was not identified are listed at the end of sections devoted to each text in van der Haeghen. The work is in three parts:

I. Works by Erasmus;
II. Works edited and/or annotated by Erasmus;
III. Books on Erasmus.

The last section is not relevant to our list.

References in our list to this work are: VH, followed by page, by a dash, and by the number of the item as it occurs on that page (or if that page includes more than one work, under the standard title of that work); i.e. VH, 2-16 means: Bibliotheca Erasmiana, page 2, the sixteenth item on the page (which happens to be Adagia). For works edited or annotated by Erasmus, we specify VH s2 for Section II.

b. the volumes devoted to several works by Erasmus in the Bibliotheca Belgica, which have appeared since 1903 (more may be forthcoming). Unfortunately, these volumes are also entitled Bibliotheca Erasmiana, thus encouraging confusion with van der Haeghen's book.

Only a few of the works of Erasmus, but including several of his best known and most frequently reprinted or translated, are treated in the twelve volumes that have so far appeared. Here the bibliographical description is highly detailed, and often editions which van der Haeghen missed are included. It must therefore be the standard work of bibliographical reference for those works of Erasmus that are included, though of course frequently still other editions of works by Erasmus have been discovered since. Our reference: BE, followed by volume number, followed by number of first page on which the item is described; e.g. BE, V, 462 (though this may mean: pages 462-465). If a volume in our collection of special interest was found neither in VH or BE, we used our judgment as to whether to provide a somewhat fuller description.
3 Basic method of organization observed in list below

We naturally begin with the editions of *Opera omnia* in 1540 and 1703-6 (plus reprint of latter). As scholars know, a completely new edition, organized by a committee of Dutch and other scholars, is in progress, and indeed the first volume has appeared – its price is, alas, high.

Then we basically follow the order of VH, which means above all listing editions of works under VH’s standardized titles alphabetically organized, with individual editions by date, as well as possible. However, apart from excluding certain materials (see above under III 1.), we decided to include at the place reserved for original editions also facsimile reprints and xerox copies (then of course so indicated), and we depart from VH’s organization by listing all vernacular translations (including those containing the text both in Latin and in a translation) separately, and language by language, beginning with English, followed by other languages. These translations are introduced by appropriate sub-headings. Thus for instance, for the *Colloquia* (note that there is also a category: *Colloquia Selecta*), we begin with those of our holdings in Latin, arranged by date, until 1700; then following the sub-heading *Colloquia Translations* are listed first any English translations we have; then those in other languages – all the volumes in vernacular up to 1970. The languages are likewise ordered alphabetically: thus translations into Dutch precede those into French, of each particular work. This seems to us a simple clear method.

Whenever in our copy a work is printed together with others, or bound together, we try to provide some brief indication, not more, for in a brief title catalogue of a particular collection such as ours, no great use would have been served if the compilers had struggled even more than they did with correct and complete identification of everything that was printed or bound together. Yet in every instance involving more than one work by Erasmus, each separate work is noted at the appropriate place – that, at least, was our aim.

4 Other aspects of our description of items

a If a certain text contained no clue as to when or where it was printed, some research was undertaken, and some experts were consulted; others, e.g. Sir Roger Mynors, volunteered information on one or two items. Result: a few were identified, more were not. This of course applies only to a fraction of what are mainly quite early and often pirated editions.

b We have usually modernized place names and frequently standardized the names of printers.

c Texts with interesting indications of earlier ownership (many in our volumes are not interesting) and marginalia or other MS notes in books are briefly described; so are sometimes indications of early censorship after the Council of Trent. Many of the MS annotations noted are of course, like those in most sixteenth-century books, of little value – but some, for all we know, may be important, and it seemed wise to err on the safe side.

d If a particular binding of a volume deserved a comment, we have provided it in general terms, without engaging in detailed research on a subject about which we know too little.

e Real defects in some of our copies are indicated, whenever we felt that scholars should be warned. As for the collector of perfect samples, we did not bear him in mind in this particular publication, however much we too appreciate perfect mint copies.