Painting and Publishing as Cultural Industries

Rasterhoff, Claartje

Published by Amsterdam University Press

Rasterhoff, Claartje.

Amsterdam University Press, 2016.
Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/66537.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/66537

For content related to this chapter
https://muse.jhu.edu/related_content?type=book&id=2361555
Appendix 1. Methods and Data

Early modern Dutch cultural production is extraordinarily well researched. Thanks to centuries of detailed investigations by art and book historians, there exists a wealth of data on producers and the products they made. Moreover, the general context in which paintings and books were produced has received ample attention. In recent years, important datasets have been built that allow for statistical analyses of cultural production. For many of the quantitative analyses, for instance the assessments of the size of the industries, extensive research was carried out on five datasets: *Short Title Catalogue Netherlands* (STCN); *Thesaurus 1473-1800*; *Adresboek Nederlandse drukkers en boekverkopers tot 1700*; ECARTICO; and RKDartists&. The datasets are comprehensive enough to allow for statistical analysis, but to accurately interpret the estimates of size, scope, and quality of production presented in this book, a brief discussion of the limitations of these datasets is warranted.

**Publishing: STCN and Thesaurus**

The STCN is the digital Dutch retrospective bibliography. This can be defined as a list of books produced in a given country or written in a certain language during a specific period, in this case the Netherlands in the period 1540-1800. The STCN contains over 190,000 titles and over 500,000 copies of books published in the Netherlands (irrespective of the language) and books in Dutch published abroad (with the exception of Belgium). The dataset is based on the collections of all major academic libraries in the Netherlands, as well as various smaller ones and important collections abroad. Therefore it only includes titles of books that have survived to the present day. Estimates suggest that around 80 per cent of the titles printed in the early modern period have survived. Because survival chances for cheap popular works are lower, this type of book is probably underrepresented in the STCN.

Of course, not all titles required the same levels of creative and financial input. The number of titles alone does nothing to indicate the size of print runs (total output) or the size of the work, let alone the quality or novelty of the printed books. There is no serial data on average print runs in early modern Europe, while fragmented sources have shown that edition sizes could range from a few hundred copies or, less often, dozens for specialized
works, to thousands for popular, often religious, works.\textsuperscript{7} Moreover, some titles are multi-volume masterpieces whereas others are ephemeral material such as ordinances and dissertations. Luckily the STCN enables searches not only by author, printer, title, year, and place of publication, but also by more advanced properties such as subject, language, size of the books, and typographical features.\textsuperscript{8} Distinctions can be made, for example, between ephemeral and non-ephemeral titles; Dutch and foreign; originals and copies; translations and reprints; the size of the sheets; and the use of decorative images, all of which are characteristics that influence the choices and investments publishers and printers had to make.\textsuperscript{9}

The size of the publishing industry was estimated by using a by-product of the STCN: the \textit{Thesaurus 1473-1800} (hereafter \textit{Thesaurus}), which lists the names and locations as well as other relevant information found on the imprints of the books in the STCN. This dataset makes it possible to estimate how many people were involved in the publishing of books in a certain town during a particular period. The list of people working in the Dutch publishing industry includes the names of booksellers, printers, and publishers found on imprints and colophons in the editions included in the STCN. Not every title page contained such information and the dataset used in this research is comprised of 7,472 names.\textsuperscript{10} The first and last year of publishing activity and the geographic locations have been linked to the names based on the bibliographical data. Both start and end points of booksellers’ careers are available, assuming he, and only occasionally she, was active in the years between. This allowed for estimating the number of people involved in book publishing, per year and location.

There are, however, some issues with the \textit{Thesaurus}. First, not every Dutch bookseller, printer, or publisher is included. A quick look at the guild archives or at the selection of published documents pertaining to the book trade in seventeenth-century Amsterdam proves this point.\textsuperscript{11} Second, only the names of those people who were credited on the imprint or colophon are listed. Basically, this means that the database comprises the names of those who invested in publications and not of the publishing, printing, and bookselling labour force at large. Because we are interested in the cultural producers rather than the journeymen, this is not a dramatic problem in terms of mapping cultural activities, but the workforce as a whole is important in observing shifts in the organization of production. Third, the group of people included in the \textit{Thesaurus} is not homogeneous. The dataset contains aliases, and no structural distinction is made between publishers, booksellers, and printers by occupation. Because during the early modern period these activities were often combined within a single
firm, this does not have to pose a particularly big problem. Nevertheless, there was occupational specialization, and the distribution of different occupations within the book trade did change over the course of the early modern period. Finally, the data is based on what is found on the imprints of the books themselves, which can be misleading. Some publishers claimed to have been responsible for printing of the work even though they never owned a print shop.¹²

The quantitative results derived from the Thesaurus should be treated with caution, and any fixed conclusions based on the dataset should be checked with more qualitative sources and micro-studies. A surprisingly large share of publishers in the STCN, for instance, is only mentioned with a handful of titles. For example, almost 40 per cent of the 2,427 names listed for Amsterdam between 1580 and 1800 are only listed for one year. They may simply have been unsuccessful in publishing, causing them to go out of business, but the large share of these ‘one-year-hits’ suggests that they either used aliases or that they were occasional publishers with a different primary occupation. In years of political turmoil such as 1647, 1672, or 1689, the share of one-year-hits rose significantly. Their share does not significantly influence the total number and trends of active booksellers per year in a significant way, and they are therefore included in the aggregate measures. However, when turning to the number of starting, rather than active, publishers, they do start to make an impact. When this measure is used, estimates which both include and exclude one-year-hits are provided. Despite these issues, the Thesaurus and the STCN are currently the best available datasets for mapping the Dutch book production sector, and without doubt the most consistent in terms of selection criteria.

Painting: ECARTICO and RKDartists&

For estimates of the number of painters active in the early modern Dutch Republic, two datasets were used: ECARTICO and RKDartists&.¹³ The ECARTICO dataset has its roots in the research project Economic and artistic competition in the Amsterdam art market c. 1630-1690: history painting in Amsterdam in Rembrandt’s time, headed by art historian Eric Jan Sluijter and economic historian Marten Jan Bok, that explored the complex fabric of artistic and economic competition in the field of history painting in Amsterdam from c.1630 through 1690. Within this project a dataset was built to collect, organize, and analyse art-historical and biographic data concerning painters, art consumers, art dealers, engravers, booksellers and
printers, gold- and silversmiths and others involved in the cultural industry of Amsterdam and the Low Countries. The database is built on a wealth of archival sources and literature, and predominantly on the data collected by Pieter Groenendijk in his lexicon *Beknopt biografisch lexicon van Zuid- en Noord-Nederlandse schilders, graveurs, etc.* (2008).\(^{14}\) The database contains biographical and demographic data on over 23,000 persons born between 1500 and 1690, but expansion is ongoing.\(^{15}\) Compared to the *Thesaurus*, the entries in the ECARTICO dataset contain much more biographical information. Unfortunately, this dataset does not include the eighteenth century. Therefore, RKDartists\& database was used to estimate the scale of the arts sector during this period. It contains information on c.250,000 Dutch and foreign artists from the Middle Ages to the present day.\(^{16}\) Unfortunately, it is not easy to systematically retrieve data from the dataset because the dataset cannot be searched using the same queries as the ECARTICO database. Lists of painters could only be generated per quarter century. Because these have been used to arrive at general estimates for the eighteenth century, they stand in sharp contrast to the more precise estimates generated by the ECARTICO dataset for the seventeenth century.

### Samples of artistic prominence

The datasets discussed above are highly useful for the assessment of patterns over time and space, but they do not allow for distinguishing on the more subjective properties of quality and novelty, let alone talent. Historiometry offers methods to measure reputation and valuation that suit the purposes of this study.\(^{17}\) Historiometry is defined as a quantitative method used for statistical analysis of retrospective data. What this comes down to is counting the number of references to famous (groups of) people in expert works and often also the space allotted to each of them.\(^{18}\) I developed several such historiometrical samples, which are listed in Table 6.4 and will be discussed below.

#### A++ sample

Charles Murray is the best-known user of historiometry, and his work provides a starting point for mapping prominent painters.\(^{19}\) He has quantified the accomplishments of individuals and countries across the globe in the fields of arts and sciences from ancient times to the mid-twentieth century by weighting the amount of space allocated to them in reference works. For
the period 1600-1820 he cross-referenced a selection of art-historical reference works and collected the names of 113 European painters, of whom 19 were Dutch. Dutch-born Peter Lely was also included in this group, though he should have been grouped with England where he spent his working life. The 18 remaining artists form the A++ sample.

A+ sample

Economists Elish Kelly and John O’Hagan have undertaken a similar endeavour, but they limited their research to prominent artists from the thirteenth century to the first half of the twentieth. Their dataset is constructed from the Oxford Dictionary of Art but cross-referenced with Reclams Künstlerlexicon to adjust for the observed Anglo bias in the Oxford Dictionary. Their sample is considerably larger than Murray’s (876 artists), but they only include those artists that occupy 0.22 column inches in the Dictionary. Of their selection, 66 were born in the Southern or Northern Netherlands and were active in the Dutch Republic between 1580 and 1800. Of these artists, 56 were based in the Republic for the majority of their work. These make up the A+ sample.

A sample

When the criterion of 0.22 column inches per artist is dropped, the sample expands considerably. For the A sample, all artists in the Oxford Dictionary who were born in the Northern or Southern Netherlands and for whom the Dutch Republic was their main work location were selected. Those artists who were only mentioned as the brother, father, or son of another painter and were bestowed with fewer than 5 lines, 21 in total, were excluded from the sample. This resulted in a selection of 111 painters born in the Republic, with the earliest born in 1527 and the latest in 1797. In addition, 16 artists were added: they were born elsewhere, but the Republic was their main work base. The total number of artists included in the A sample is 138, almost twice the size of the A+ sample.

The length of text allotted to each individual artist’s entry varies greatly from only a few lines for minor artists to long sections for acclaimed painters such as Rembrandt. This obviously also reflects the editor’s personal view of the pecking order within the pantheon of Dutch artists. In some cases the choice of the painters rests not only on their fame as painters, but also on their influence as authors on art theory of their era as was the case for both Karel van Mander and Samuel van Hoogstraten. The exact ranking
of painters in the samples is not particularly relevant for the purposes of this study. It is more important that the samples do not display great inconsistencies. As many as 14 of Murray’s significant artists are included in both Kelly’s and O’Hagan’s top 20. Almost without exception the same 30 names recur throughout the different top 20s.

B sample

All A samples are based on international reference works that cover an extensive time frame and geographic area. For the B sample, an art-historical work dealing exclusively with the Dutch Republic is used: Bob Haak’s seminal overview of Dutch Golden Age painting. Not surprisingly, this dataset is more inclusive, increasing to 266 painters, twice the size of the A sample. However, Haak’s book only deals with the seventeenth century. For the eighteenth century there was no comparable seminal work and therefore the exhibition catalogues *De kroon op het werk: Hollandse schilderkunst 1670-1750* and *The Age of Elegance: Paintings from the Rijksmuseum, 1700-1800* were used for cross-referencing. This yielded the names of 63 painters. Excluding double counts, the total number of artists in this sample is 317.

C sample

The lack of a seminal work on Dutch painting in the eighteenth century is indicative of the Golden Age bias in art history. To compensate for this, a sample on contemporary reputation was created. The C sample encompasses references in contemporary sources. Lexicons drawn up by contemporary biographers, including Karel van Mander, Arnold Houbraken, Johan van Gool, Roeland van Eynden and Adriaan van der Willigen (1766-1841), were used to assess the status of artists and the appraisal of quality in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They published the following four well-known lexicons to establish a selection of prominent painters according to contemporaries: Van Mander’s *Schilder-boeck* (1604), Houbraken *Grote Schouburgh* (1718-1721), Van Gool’s *Nieuwe Schouburg* (1750-1751), and Van Eynden’s and Van der Willigen’s *Geschiedenis* (1816-1840). Excluding double counts, the total number of artists in this sample is 995.
Industrial organization: prosopographies and archival research

The thesis deals with the Dutch Republic and particularly with the province of Holland, the area where cultural production was concentrated. In addition to the aggregate data derived from the STCN, one town in particular takes centre stage. Amsterdam was the largest town in the Dutch Republic as well as the most important and most culturally diverse. This case study serves to take a closer look at the local production system and illustrate the findings. In order to identify common characteristics of local groups of painters and publishers, the method of prosopography is applied. Prosopographical research aims to identify patterns of relationships and activities of a group of people through the study of their collective biography. This is done by collecting and analysing biographical data surrounding a (well-defined) individual. Individuals in a prosopographical dataset should have something in common such as region of origin, religion, or, in this case, profession. It is basically a system for organizing limited data in such a way that it can reveal connections and patterns influencing historical processes.

Names of active publishers and painters were collected for five benchmark years: 1585, 1600, 1630, 1674, and 1742 (Table A1). These years represent significant periods in the history of the Dutch Republic. The first two exemplify the early years after the Dutch Revolt; 1630 relates to the middle of the Golden Age; 1674 coincides with the years of economic and political trouble; and, finally, 1742 was in the middle of period of economic stagnation or even decline.

**Table A1** Number of producers in Amsterdam prosopographies per benchmark year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>N producers, publishing</th>
<th>N producers, painting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1585</td>
<td>9 (STCN: 8)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1600</td>
<td>29 (STCN: 22)</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1630</td>
<td>39 (STCN: 57)</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1674</td>
<td>58 (STCN: 111)</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1742</td>
<td>61 (STCN: 177)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The key variables in the collective biography are the places and years of birth and death, work locations, professional status, guild memberships, family ties, master-apprentice relationships, wealth estimates, addresses,
social background, and publishing activity in the STCN. Due to the fact that the *Thesaurus* dataset does not contain biographical data on producers, whereas the ECARTICO dataset does, the process of collecting information for the prosopographies of publishers required more use of micro-studies on individual producers.\(^3\) Not all known publishers are included, and this has resulted in a smaller prosopographical sample than in the case of painting, in which all Amsterdam painters listed in ECARTICO at the time of consultation have been included. A drawback of the prosopographical method is that group characteristics reveal little to nothing about day-to-day business strategies or institutional organization. Therefore the research was expanded by in-depth studies of individual firms. To some extent this could be done by consulting available studies on painters and publishers in the form of monographs, articles, or lexicon entries. This information was further complemented with a broad range of archival material, for example tax registers, guild archives, and notarial archives.

**Notes**

1. Many thanks to Marieke van Delft of the KB and the members of the ECARTICO project, especially Harm Nijboer, for providing access to the datasets. The dump of the *Thesaurus* was generated 13 March 2009.
4. The geographic area referred to as ‘the Netherlands’ was not fixed during the period covered by the STCN, which raises the issue of whether or not Flemish books should also be included. As soon as the STCV, which is set up according to the same description formulas, is completed, it will be possible to study book production in the Low Countries.
8. As of 2015, a new and more advanced search infrastructure was launched: SPARQL, based on Structured Query Language.
9. Cf. Gruys and Bos, *t’Gvlder iacer 1650*. ‘Ephemeral titles’ refers to pamphlets, ordinances, academic works and occasional titles, such as marriage-poems.
10. As of September 16 2009.
11. Kleerkooper and Van Stockum, *Boekhandel te Amsterdam*, vol. I or Van Eeghen, *De Amsterdamse boekhandel*. See also chapter 6 of this book, in which this is illustrated quantitatively.
12. Examples are Dirck Pietersz Pers, who, name notwithstanding, did not print. Cornelis Claesz is another example.
15. http://www.vondel.humanities.uva.nl/ecartico/ (last accessed 20 February 2015). At the time of research for this dissertation the count stood at some 12,000 entries.
17. Woods, ‘*Historiometry as an Exact Science*’. See also Rita Gerlach, who compared theatre quality in Britain and Germany: Gerlach, ‘The Question of Quality’.
18. Consider for example: Murray, *Human Accomplishment*.
19. Ibid.
22. Although Kelly and O’Hagan include one Dutch painter for the eighteenth century, Jacob Asmus Carstens was in fact Danish.
23. Note that artists born and active only in the sixteenth century are not counted.
26. This selection was cross-referenced with two other sources: *Grove’s Dictionary of Art*’s overview of seventeenth-century Dutch artists and the online resource *Web Gallery of Art*. With presence in all three sources as a criterion, the size of the sample decreased to circa 130 painters, roughly the same amount and composition as the A sample. Turner, *From Rembrandt to Vermeer*; Virtual museum of European painting and sculpture of the Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque periods (1100-1800), www.wga.hu, accessed 20 August 2010.
27. Mai et al., eds., *Kroon op het werk*; Loos et al., *Age of Elegance*.
such lexicons from other countries include d’Argenville, *Abregé de la vie des plus fameux peintres*; Descamps, *La vie des peintres*; Smith, *Catalogue Raisonné of the Most Eminent Dutch, Flemish and French Painters*.


31. The years 1674 and 1742 were not chosen at random. For these years tax registers were available.

32. For publishing in the years 1585, 1600 and 1630 the main source was: Moes and Burger, *Amsterdamse boekdrukkers en uitgevers*, Briels, *Zuidnederlandse boekverkopers* and Leuven, *De boekhandel te Amsterdam*. For the years 1674, 1710 and 1742: Van Eeghen, *De Amsterdamse boekhandel*, Leuven, *De boekhandel te Amsterdam*. For archival documents involving Amsterdam publishers active in the seventeenth century see: Kleerkooper and Van Stockum, *Boekhandel te Amsterdam*, vol. I. These sources were checked against the *Thesaurus* and Molhuysen and Blok, eds., *NNBW*, and complemented with additional information found in articles and monographs on individual producers.